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OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Wednesday, November 26, 1997

Speaker: The Honourable Gilbert Parent

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, November 26, 1997

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

• (1400)

The Speaker: As is our practice on Wednesday we will now sing *O Canada* and we will be led by the hon. member for Simcoe—Grey.

[*Editor's Note: Members sang the national anthem*]

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*English*]

CANADA TELEVISION AND CABLE PRODUCTION FUND

Ms. Sarmite Bulte (Parkdale—High Park, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, television is our most powerful communications tool. Canadians watch it at least 24 hours a week but what they watch is what is in abundance, American programming.

Canadians deserve Canadian programming. The renewal of the Canada television and cable production fund will go a long way to achieve this end.

The fund represents a uniquely successful partnership of public and private funding. It couples government and cable industry contributed moneys to increase the presence of high quality Canadian programming.

Last year the fund supported 376 projects and employed over 19,000 Canadians, with direct and indirect economic benefits estimated at \$525 million.

A fine example of this was the Avro Arrow mini-series which was produced by two of my constituents. It was written by Keith Leckie and co-produced by Marie Young-Leckie. This show has now been sold throughout the world.

The renewal of the fund represents not only the government's commitment to Canadian television, but also recognizes the positive economic impact of Canada's arts industry.

VICTIMS BILL OF RIGHTS

Mr. Randy White (Langley—Abbotsford, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I remember April 29 of last year so well. The Reform Party brought a motion before the House to initiate a national victims bill of rights.

The Liberals supported the motion. We had one committee meeting where some victims rights representatives and myself were listened to, but then nothing happened. How pathetic it is that the Liberal government can give so much hope to so many victims and deliberately forget they even exist after one meeting.

What about the right to know the status of the offender, the right to give written or oral victim impact statements and the right to know if plea bargaining is taking place?

It is easy to see why the general public has lost faith in this institution. They see false promises and ignorance of the plight of victims from a government that puts more emphasis on getting re-elected than protecting its citizens.

My message to victims is this: I will not forget you. The Reform Party will not forget you. Some day a Reform government will legislate your national victims bill of rights.

* * *

MINING

Mr. Benoît Serré (Timiskaming—Cochrane, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when our government took office, mining investment in Canada was in decline. Since then our government's work with the mining industry to reduce regulatory overlap and duplication, implement innovative changes to our tax system and promote environmentally friendly mining practices is resulting in concrete benefits for Canadians.

For example in 1996, 20 new mines were opened or re-opened, creating 1,790 new jobs. In 1997 it is expected that 31 mines will open, generating over 6,000 direct and indirect jobs. By 1998, 32 new mines are expected to open. All in all, Natural Resources Canada predicts that over the next five years the mining industry will create 15,000 direct jobs and 15,000 indirect jobs in Canada.

I am proud to be a part of this government's efforts to assist the mining industry in creating these much needed jobs. I look forward to continuing our work together.

S. O. 31

MINING

Mr. Réginald Bélair (Timmins—James Bay, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to welcome the representatives of the mining industry to Keep Mining in Canada's third annual lobby day.

Mining is the backbone of many communities in northern Ontario, particularly in Timmins where it employs some 3,000 people.

Mining and metals exploration expenditures in Canada reached almost \$900 million in 1996. My riding of Timmins—James Bay has paralleled this growth with expenditures rising to \$43 million in 1996.

[*Translation*]

In 1995, the mines in my riding had a production value of \$836 million. My riding's economy will benefit even further, with the opening of two new mines, by Echo Bay Mines and Royal Oak Mines.

I am proud to be part of a government that is committed to developing, with the mining industry, policies that will ensure the economic growth of mining communities in northern Ontario and across Canada.

* * *

• (1405)

[*English*]

GORDON WRIGHT

Mr. Paul Bonwick (Simcoe—Grey, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure today that I rise in this House to pay tribute to a great Canadian, Mr. Gordon Wright, a resident in my riding of Simcoe—Grey.

Mr. Wright has dedicated his life to the service of others, whether it be serving our country during World War II, as an educator for the past 50 years, or most recently leading the charge for a multi-use facility with an educational component focusing on diabetes. Mr. Wright realizes that educating people and in particular our youth would be a huge step in countering this rapidly growing debilitating disease.

If he were here, I am sure Mr. Banting himself would be honoured by the dedication Mr. Wright has shown over the past six decades.

I urge all my colleagues to join Mr. Wright, the residents of New Tecumseth and myself in trying to achieve this goal of education. I salute a great Canadian, Mr. Gordon Wright, an example to us all.

* * *

MINING

Mr. David Chatters (Athabasca, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, today is Keep Mining in Canada day. It is only fitting to remind this

government and especially the Minister of the Environment about the contribution the mining sector has on the Canadian economy.

By this minister's remarks to the Canadian Electricity Association, she is clearly making the coal industry an economic casualty of the climate change program, even after this government has been promising for months that its program would not result in major economic loss to the Canadian economy.

Let me remind the minister that the coal mining sector in Canada employs 73,000 people and generates over \$5.8 billion annually to the Canadian economy.

I hold out the same example she used in her speech, that of Edmonton Power which has committed to achieve the Rio commitment by the year 2000 without eliminating the use of coal in its generation of electricity.

How are Canadians going to trust a government that engages in this kind of doublespeak? It is time for this government to come clean on the real costs.

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[*Translation*]

JACQUES PARIZEAU

Mr. Denis Coderre (Bourassa, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the separatists are ashamed. They are ashamed of the words and deeds of their members.

Their latest fabrication is that former FLQ member Raymond Villeneuve is in the pay of the federalists. I say the separatists should have the courage of conviction of their own. Their former premier, Mr. Parizeau, is not at all embarrassed by his shameful remarks to those he considers ethnic minorities.

To eliminate any confusion, I repeat one quote "I admire Mr. Parizeau very much. He is one of the most brilliant politicians of his generation, he is an extraordinary man". Those are the words of Lucien Bouchard.

I challenge all the members of the Bloc Québécois, especially the head of the PQ branch in Quebec City, to disclaim the remarks of Jacques Parizeau and the actions of their friend Raymond Villeneuve. If they do not, it means they agree with them.

* * *

APEC

Mrs. Maud Debien (Laval East, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the summit of the leaders of the 18 members of the Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation forum was held this week in Vancouver. APEC is a forum for discussions focussing on freer trade.

APEC does not include representatives of civil society or permit discussion of any controversial issue and defines itself more as an association of economies rather than countries, thus ensuring that its decisions are not subject to any control. Furthermore, since

1989, APEC has not drafted a single economic or political principle its members can claim to share.

We find it deplorable that the Canadian government has not encouraged the leaders of APEC to examine rights and freedoms and the progress of democracy.

On the other hand, the Bloc Québécois recognizes and supports the parallel people's summit, which dealt with the social aspect of APEC countries' trade policies. It was a summit where real things were discussed.

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JACQUES PARIZEAU

Ms. Eleni Bakopanos (Ahuntsic, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again I have been insulted by the words of the former leader of the Parti Québécois, Jacques Parizeau. Despite the 39 years I have spent in Quebec, I will never be considered a full-fledged Quebecer by the separatists.

This country the PQ wants to create, is it one from which everybody who is not an old stock Quebecer will be excluded? I consider these words a personal attack on my children and myself, as well as on all other Quebecers of Greek origin.

[English]

When are the separatists going to realize once and for all that we are neither pawns nor puppets led by one side or the other, but full members of Quebec society with our opinions, which we have the liberty to express in a democratic society.

• (1410)

[Translation]

Another quote from Lucien Bouchard "I admire Mr. Parizeau very much. He is one of the most brilliant politicians of his generation, he is an extraordinary man".

Will Mr. Bouchard and the leaders of the separatist movement condemn these shameful words of their former leader, or will they, by keeping quiet as usual, approve of Mr. Parizeau's intolerant position?

* * *

[English]

THE LATE JUSTICE JOHN SOPINKA

Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to a great defender of individual liberties and a man learned in law. I refer to the late Mr. Justice John Sopinka of the Supreme Court of Canada who passed away earlier this week.

John Sopinka was born in Broderick, Saskatchewan in 1933. From humble roots he rose to become a leading Canadian civil

litigator. John Sopinka knew the importance of protecting our civil liberties. After being appointed to the bench he became one of the court's strongest defenders of the rights of the individual.

John Sopinka was a leader in many ways. He was the first Canadian of Ukrainian origin to be appointed to the supreme court. He believed that Canadians of all backgrounds should participate in the justice system but insisted that everyone, especially himself, be judged on merit, not ethnicity.

On behalf of Canadians, I would like to extend our heartfelt condolences to Mr. Sopinka's family. We have lost a great Canadian and we mourn his passing.

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[Translation]

JACQUES PARIZEAU

Ms. Marlene Jennings (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, yesterday Mr. Parizeau made a statement claiming that all federalist Quebecers were of ethnic origin.

I have a question to ask of the PQ and the Bloc today: When will I qualify as a full-fledged Quebecer? As a black women from a variety of ethnic backgrounds: aboriginal, French Canadian, Metis, Belgian, born in Ville-Jacques-Cartier, I ask the leader of the Bloc "when?"

It scarcely seems necessary to ask this of Mr. Bouchard, for his opinion could not be any clearer, and I quote: "I admire Mr. Parizeau very much. He is one of the most brilliant politicians of his generation, he is an extraordinary man".

When will the Bloc and the PQ stop throwing our non-French ethnic origins in our faces, labelling us federalist Quebecers? When will they dissociate themselves from this type—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Vancouver East has the floor.

* * *

[English]

APEC

Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I was proud to attend the APEC people's summit held in Vancouver from November 17 to 24 with my NDP colleagues, the member for Burnaby—Douglas and the member for Winnipeg Centre.

This gathering of representatives of NGOs, labour, environment, women and aboriginal peoples discussed critical concerns about the impact of trade liberalization and globalized corporate power. We heard powerful testimony about the terrible working conditions and denial of basic human rights.

APEC's agenda of unrestricted corporate trade and control is increasing the exploitation of people and the environment. The

Oral Questions

right to food, shelter, a living wage, political and civil liberties and protection of the environment must be our priorities.

What comes out of the people's summit is a strong commitment to a vision for action based on meeting our human needs and putting people before profits.

* * *

JACQUES PARIZEAU

Hon. Sheila Finestone (Mount Royal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Jacques Parizeau said yesterday that his money and ethnic votes statement is not a claim, it is a statistic.

Statistics or not, we live in a country with freedom of expression and with the right to feel that we are full citizens. As citizens who have and do contribute to the well-being of our city, province and country, we are entitled to our ethnic views, our vote and our choice for a future in Canada.

Mr. Parizeau is not an ordinary citizen. He was the premier of our province and as such had an obligation to include, with respect, all citizens regardless of their perspective. His xenophobia is unacceptable.

The same goes for Mr. Bouchard who stated that he is "a fervent admirer of Mr. Parizeau and that he is one of the most brilliant political figures of his generation, an extraordinary man". Sadly Mr. Bouchard is entitled to his narrow vision but it is not the opinion shared by the majority of Quebecers. We have the right to our opinions, our choice for our future and that of our families and our children.

Enough is enough, Mr. Parizeau and Mr. Bouchard.

* * *

DISABILITY PENSION

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester, PC): Mr. Speaker, I have a unique perspective returning to the House of Commons in 1997. After having served in 1988 to 1993, I had a little vacation and then was invited back. There are many changes that have occurred over that period but the most frustrating and dramatic change is the change in Canada pension disability. I now have constituents who have been on waiting lists for years waiting for a hearing or an appeal, people like Archie Black, Marjorie Newman or Mr. Reginald Bavis.

● (1415)

Mr. Bavis has progressive multiple sclerosis. He is totally disabled. He cannot work. He is still denied Canada pension disability. Mr. Bavis worked all his life and now he needs a little help. He has exhausted all his resources.

I will be providing the Minister of Human Resources Development with a file about Mr. Bavis right now. I respectfully request that the minister take this in hand and provide the assistance that Mr. Bavis needs.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

KREVER INQUIRY

Mr. Preston Manning (Leader of the Opposition, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the tainted blood scandal is the worst public health disaster in Canada's history. Thousands of innocent Canadians have died or are dying in part because of the federal government's inattention to public safety.

Today Canada's foremost expert on that tragedy, Justice Krever, finally got the chance to tell Canadians the truth about Canada's infected blood supply.

Will the government implement Krever's recommendations and ensure that this tragedy never happens again?

Hon. Don Boudria (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we on this side of the House intend to adhere to the embargo until 3 p.m.

Members on both sides of the House have been briefed on the contents of Mr. Krever's report. I would hope that the hon. Leader of the Opposition would do likewise.

Mr. Preston Manning (Leader of the Opposition, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I just asked for a commitment to implement the recommendations.

The government has frustrated Justice Krever every step of the way. It took his inquiry to court to try to censor what he could write about. It deliberately withheld cabinet documents from an earlier period from his inquiry. It publicly criticized and insulted the inquiry and it refused to act on Krever's interim recommendations.

After years of frustrating the Krever inquiry, will the government make a commitment today to implement his recommendations?

Hon. Don Boudria (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I totally reject the hon. gentleman's premises to his question. He will know, as I said a while ago, that this document is under embargo. Surely he will have the patience of his own critic for the next 45 minutes to wait for the report.

Mr. Preston Manning (Leader of the Opposition, Ref.): Right to the last they frustrate it, Mr. Speaker.

Ordinary Canadians want to have faith in the blood system. The trouble is that the government has gone ahead without listening to Krever. The health minister started a new blood system that contains many of the same components as the old system. Krever was shut out of this transition team and consumer groups have been shut out too.

How can Canadians feel secure that our national blood system is safe again, given that the health minister may well be repeating the mistakes of the past?

Hon. Don Boudria (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Again, Mr. Speaker, these are rather gratuitous remarks made toward the Minister of Health and others in the government.

If the hon. member across claims not to know the content of the report, I do not know how he can make such frivolous accusations. If he knows, I wish he would wait until three o'clock when the report is released.

Our government is looking forward to the report. It will be studied carefully. We intend to do our best to ensure that the blood system in this country is one in which all Canadians have full confidence.

* * *

SENATE OF CANADA

Mr. Rahim Jaffer (Edmonton—Strathcona, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, last month when a Senate seat opened up in Alberta the Prime Minister angrily refused to allow Albertans the choice for who would represent them.

The premier of Alberta wanted an election, the Liberal leader in Alberta wanted an election, the people of Alberta wanted a senate election.

Why did the Prime Minister deliberately ignore the wishes of Albertans by appointing another senator for Alberta?

Hon. Herb Gray (Deputy Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister took seriously the various views expressed, but he has a constitutional duty.

I expect that the Reform Party, interested in respect for the law, should respect the Prime Minister for carrying out his constitutional duties.

Mr. Rahim Jaffer (Edmonton—Strathcona, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, Albertans elected a senator in 1990, and it is not against the constitution, which we have the right to do.

• (1420)

We are sick of the Prime Minister appointing senators to an unelected, unaccountable, undemocratic haven of patronage.

How much longer will the Prime Minister disrespect the expressed wishes of Albertans?

Hon. Herb Gray (Deputy Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the senator from Alberta is Thelma Chalifoux, an innovative educator and pioneering activist in the field of native housing. She is a leading member of the Canadian Metis community.

Oral Questions

If the hon. member says that he is sick of such appointments, he and the Reform Party should be—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: The hon. member for Laurier—Sainte-Marie.

* * *

[Translation]

CALGARY DECLARATION

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is definitely the first time I see the senators generate so much excitement.

We now know that the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs endorses the Reform Party's position, which urges Parliament to consult Quebeckers regarding the Calgary declaration.

Are we to understand that the federal government has decided to go over the head of the Quebec government and the National Assembly to consult Quebeckers on its own?

Hon. Stéphane Dion (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as elected members from Quebec, we have a duty to consult our fellow citizens, and we are doing so on an agreement that will enable us to show that Quebeckers and other Canadians share the same values and want to remain united in this country.

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, this is a polite way of saying that the federal government does not care about Quebec's referendum acts.

By supporting the motion, is the federal government not also supporting certain unusual consultation processes in the other provinces? I am thinking of the 1-800 lines, the questionnaires, the Internet, the fax machines, and all these other not so serious means.

Is this the type of phoney consultations the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs has in mind for Quebec?

Hon. Stéphane Dion (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the provincial premiers are doing a good job under the circumstances.

However, let me give you an example of a phoney consultation. I am alluding to a referendum question to choose a country, in which reference was made to a bill on the future of Quebec and to an agreement signed on June 12. However, a poll conducted during the referendum campaign showed that only 43% of Quebeckers knew which agreement was referred to, only 10% knew which bill was referred to, while 43% believed that Quebec could only become a sovereign nation after signing a partnership agreement. This is an example of a phoney and fraudulent consultation, and it will not happen again.

Oral Questions

Mr. Pierre Brien (Témiscamingue, BQ): Mr. Speaker, fortunately Quebecers have much more judgement than the minister. They understood what was at stake, even if he did not.

Other provinces have been so efficient at consulting their citizens about the Calgary declaration that certain of them have had to cancel consultation days. In Calgary itself, the people questioned during a CBC broadcast said they had never heard of the Calgary declaration.

So how can the minister talk about consulting the people of Quebec when the very folks who signed the Calgary declaration are not even able to carry out consultations properly?

Hon. Stéphane Dion (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, consultations are being held and they are going well, and that is precisely what is annoying the Bloc Québécois. They would dearly love to see the consultations fail, but the problem for them is that things are going well.

• (1425)

But I repeat that the last referendum question was deceptive. Try asking the question clearly "Do you want to abandon Canada and separate?" and you will get such a clear answer from Quebecers that that will automatically mean the end of your movement.

Mr. Pierre Brien (Témiscamingue, BQ): Mr. Speaker, over 93% of people voted, and I am certain they knew what they were doing, even if he does not.

Many people are starting to call for amendments to the Calgary declaration: First Nations, francophones in Ontario and in Newfoundland, and even their new ally, the Reform Party, is jumping on the bandwagon.

My question is therefore as follows: What exactly does the minister want to consult the people of Quebec about, when support for the Calgary declaration is eroding daily?

Hon. Stéphane Dion (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.): No, Mr. Speaker, it is not eroding. However, if ever the separatists were to put a clear question to the people, they would see that the majority of Quebecers want to remain in Canada and want nothing to do with their proposal, and that is where the erosion would be.

* * *

[English]

HEALTH

Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of Health, I would like to direct my question to the Deputy Prime Minister.

Canadians are aghast that this Liberal government has severely eroded its commitment to health protection through deregulation, privatization and massive cuts.

A safe, secure national blood system requires exactly the opposite approach, a strong regulatory framework and sufficient financial resources.

Instead of more cuts, will the federal government back up its earnest words with cold, hard cash?

Hon. Don Boudria (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I answered to a previous question, this government is interested and wants a safe blood system, one that will enjoy the confidence of all Canadians.

We are looking forward to Mr. Krever's report which will come out in a little more than half an hour. I am sure the hon. member will want to be fully aware of the contents of that report and then, of course, we would welcome her questions on that document once it is tabled.

Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I think it is clear that all Canadians are going to be concerned about the contents of the report but they want to know whether this government is going to put its money where its mouth is.

A safe, secure blood system is a matter of life and death. This government has a terrible history of slashing funds and cutting services that protect the health of Canadians.

Will the federal government assure Canadians today that the money will be there to ensure a safe, secure blood system for the people of this country?

Hon. Don Boudria (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, obviously this government supports a safe blood system for all Canadians and one that will enjoy the confidence of all Canadians.

We intend to do everything we can. I would urge the hon. member to listen to the answer. That is what we intend to do for the benefit of all Canadians.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Hon. Jean J. Charest (Sherbrooke, PC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the governor of the Bank of Canada increased the bank rate 25 basis points, allegedly for the purpose of propping up Canada's dollar.

The last time I looked this morning, the Canadian dollar was either where it was or actually lower than it was before the increase in interest rates.

Could the Minister of Finance explain to Canadians what it is exactly that he is trying to accomplish? What is wrong with his economic policies then if the dollar did not increase in value?

Oral Questions

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Conservative Party, having himself been a member of a government, knows that the Minister of Finance does not comment on the value of the dollar.

What he should also understand is that in fact interest rates are a matter of inflationary expectations. What occurred the last time the government raised the overnight rate is that long-term rates came down. It is long-term rates upon which investment decisions are made and upon which large consumer items are purchased.

In fact, what the Bank of Canada is doing is very responsible.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Jean J. Charest (Sherbrooke, PC): Mr. Speaker, in a meeting between the Conseil du patronat du Québec and the federal Liberal caucus, the Conseil complained that the government was trying to increase interest rates when, as far as we can see, the rate of inflation is fairly stable. They complained that this policy was going to affect jobs.

[*English*]

I would like to know today why it is that the government is pursuing policies, whether it is EI premiums, increases in CPP premiums and now an increase in interest rates that are having a damaging effect on the 1.4 million unemployed in Canada.

• (1430)

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me simply say that 10 year bonds have been down 27 basis points in the last two months and 30 year bonds are down 39 basis points. In fact 30 year bonds are now at a record low as are mortgages.

In terms of EI premiums, the minister of human resources announced last week that they were cut from \$2.90 to \$2.70. When we took office they were on their way to \$3.30. As far as CPP premiums are concerned, the reason the federal government—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Skeena.

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ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Mr. Mike Scott (Skeena, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, a department of Indian affairs internal spending analysis obtained by the Reform Party is a catalogue of failure and a scathing indictment of the government. Words like non-compliance, inadequate documentation, double dipping, fraud and cooking the books are rife throughout.

A section of the report reveals DIAND officials think 20% to 50% of nearly \$1 billion in aboriginal social assistance is not accounted for.

How could the minister possibly explain this massive abuse when so many are so badly in need?

Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, having travelled across the country and spoken to first nations leaderships, having spoken with the commissioners involved in the royal commission report on aboriginal people and having received the report to which the hon. member referred, there is nothing clearer in my mind than the fact the social assistance program we have in place to support aboriginal people needs modernization and change.

It is my commitment to work with first nations and aboriginal people to do just that and to modernize the program. I would ask the hon. member to work with me.

Mr. Mike Scott (Skeena, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, that dog won't hunt.

In 1994 the auditor general said there was a problem and the government said that it would deal with it. Now, three years later, we find out that the problem not only still exists but is worse.

When did the minister first become aware of this document? Have her own departmental officials been stonewalling her?

Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have already spoken out on the need for change to social assistance for aboriginal people.

It is a program of great support for aboriginal people. Their unemployment levels are at 40%, 50% and 60%. We need to modernize the system to ensure that it is not a system of dependency but a system that is proactive and empowers aboriginal people to engage in economic development and the strategies that will make their lives better.

* * *

[*Translation*]

OPTION CANADA

Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Mitis, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Canadian Heritage.

In the murky business of Option Canada, the minister can say all she wants but, by refusing to tell us how the \$4.8 million was spent, she is putting herself above Quebec's referendum act.

Will the minister confirm that she is hiding the details of these expenditures because she knows full well that such expenditures were in violation of Quebec's referendum act?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): No, Mr. Speaker.

Oral Questions

Mr. Michel Gauthier: That is the most substantial answer she has ever given.

Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Mitis, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the minister already admitted in this House that she was even prepared to break the law to protect her country. Is that not precisely what she did?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I never said that. Speaking of breaking the law, I think that, with the tax scandal they are facing, if I were in the Bloc Québécois or the Parti Québécois, I would not talk about people breaking the law.

* * *

[English]

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Miss Deborah Grey (Edmonton North, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the Indian affairs minister talks about modernizing social programs on reserves. She talks all the time about the partnerships programs she is involved in, but I think there is a problem with partnerships in her own department. In fact her officials have not even clued her in to the surprise report she found out about today.

I want the minister to stand in her place to tell us when she learned about the report.

Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have been reviewing the recommendations of the royal commission. As the new minister I have been coming to understand the roles and responsibilities of my ministry. It is absolutely clear to me that changing and modernizing the support we provide to aboriginal people must occur.

In my view we could look to the provinces that have found new and modern ways to provide social assistance, income support and real training initiatives for Canadians. We must do the same for our aboriginal people.

• (1435)

Miss Deborah Grey (Edmonton North, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, it is just more rhetoric that has gone on for a generation about the whole department. The question was when did she find out about this report. That is very important to the modernizing and partnership she talked about. The problem will not go away.

She cannot write more memos, commission more studies and look into more committees on this issue. Canadians want to know when we will ever be able to solve the problem on reserves. When did she find out about this damning report of her own department?

Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member would care

to look into things and really understand what is happening in first nations communities, she would find indeed—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: Important questions are being asked and important answers are being given. I would ask all hon. members to refrain from heckling so we can hear what is being said on both sides.

Hon. Jane Stewart: My point is that there are other ways of receiving information. It has become clear to me that first nations are making changes to support their people and to provide not only income support but new strategies for connecting aboriginal people to the economic levers of the country.

We all have a role to play in that regard. I would ask the opposition to consider that and join us in partnership.

* * *

[Translation]

DRUG PATENTS

Ms. Hélène Alarie (Louis-Hébert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Standing Committee on Industry extensively reviewed the drug patents issue and recommended in its April report that the 20-year life of patents remain unchanged. However, we know that there are tensions within the cabinet on this issue.

My question is directed to the Minister of Industry. Can the government indicate if its position is the one taken by the Minister of Health, who is in favour of easing the rules, or the one taken by the Minister of Industry, who is comfortable with the 20-year period?

Hon. John Manley (Minister of Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our position is clear, it was discussed on a number of occasions in this House. We will honour our international commitments, which means that we must respect the 20-year patent protection period.

Ms. Hélène Alarie (Louis-Hébert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, can the government give us the assurance that, whether or not the link regulations are amended, the actual life of patents will not be affected in any way?

[English]

Hon. John Manley (Minister of Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is a very important question. The issue with respect to the regulations is simply to ensure the 20 year patent protection period afforded not just pharmaceutical products but all patents is neither more nor less than 20 years.

The industry committee heard evidence from some who said it caused an extension of the period and from others who said it was not effective in giving 20 year protection. Any changes we make will be intended simply and clearly to ensure that 20 years is it. No more, no less.

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Mr. Preston Manning (Leader of the Opposition, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, we are not satisfied with the answer from the minister of Indian affairs.

The department has received report after report on fiscal mismanagement within the department but nothing happens. We want to know precisely when the minister received this indictment of her department so we can judge how long it has taken her to act. When did she receive this report?

Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it was the department that commissioned this report in response to the auditor general's requirements. We do not stop working while we are waiting for reports. We understand we have a responsibility to make change and do it effectively.

I ask hon. members to look at communities across the country that are modernizing their approaches and providing new ways of modern transparent governance to make life better for aboriginal people. We all have a responsibility in this regard. I would ask them to understand how things have been changing, to get on the wave and to join us.

• (1440)

Mr. Preston Manning (Leader of the Opposition, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, it is ordinary aboriginal people we are thinking about. These people have seen study after study after study to take \$6 billion from the top of that department—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: The hon. member for Calgary Southwest.

Mr. Preston Manning: Mr. Speaker, when did the minister become aware of the report which is a damning indictment of her ability to finance aboriginal social assistance?

Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me use an example. Maybe this will help.

I travelled to the Alexander first nation which is north of Edmonton in the member's community. There we have a new relationship with the fiscal transfer. The leaders in that community have changed their whole provision of social assistance. Where they had 100 people receiving income support, through modern strategies there are now only 11.

The changes are happening. We just have to speed them up, modernize them and work together.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

SOCIAL HOUSING

Mr. Réal Ménard (Hochelaga—Maisonneuve, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Public Works and Government Services.

It has already been two years since the federal government announced its intention to withdraw from social housing and transfer full responsibility for that area to the provinces, along with the related budgets. Since then, negotiations with Quebec have been dragging on.

Since Quebec is home to 29% of those living in inadequate housing in Canada, and since it is far from getting its fair share of federal funds, will the minister pledge to make up, once negotiations are completed, for this traditional shortfall, which represents, for those living in inadequate housing—

The Speaker: The Minister of Public Works and Government Services.

Hon. Alfonso Gagliano (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government is negotiating with all the provinces and territories regarding the transfer of social housing, to avoid duplication. Some provinces have already signed an agreement, while others, including Quebec, which the member referred to, are still negotiating.

We have to look at the global picture. The hon. member says Quebec did not get its fair share. I can tell him that under the Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program, the RRAP, Quebec is getting over 32%.

* * *

[English]

MINING

Mr. Stan Dromisky (Thunder Bay—Atikokan, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Natural Resources.

Today representatives of the mining industry from across Canada have come to Ottawa to outline their current challenges. What steps is the government taking to ensure an attractive investment climate for the mining industry in this great country of ours?

Hon. Ralph E. Goodale (Minister of Natural Resources and Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, mining in Canada employs about 350,000 people. It is the economic backbone of some 150 communities. It contributes \$24 billion to our economy and generates about \$40 billion worth of exports.

Government actions in support of mining in Canada include the success we have had in shaving four points off interest rates and the

Oral Questions

fact that we are supporting world class science and technology, particularly in the field of geoscience.

We have made our commitments to federal regulatory streamlining. We issued guidelines for greater certainty into the regulatory process. The list goes on and we will continue in that vein.

* * *

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Mr. Jack Ramsay (Crowfoot, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, we have heard from aboriginal people at the grassroots complaining about the misdirection of funding. The minister would not even meet with them.

When did the minister find out about this report? Either it was kept from her against her knowledge, or she was aware of it and did nothing. Which is it?

• (1445)

Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we received the report in 1996. As I point out, we have been working to modernize and make changes in the area of social assistance. If the opposition would look at the changes that are occurring community by community, it would see the changes that have transpired.

I have been listening to the public as well and I would say that this is what it is saying about Reform. You and your party have had some success in creating only self-propelling stereotypes that victimize aboriginal people as unable to practise acceptable standards of conduct.

We believe it is the conduct of Reform MPs that should be scrutinized—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Crowfoot.

Mr. Jack Ramsay (Crowfoot, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, we are asking this minister about the report that we understand was dumped on her this morning, today, which she knew nothing about until now.

Would she confirm to this House whether that is the truth? If it is not, then set us straight here in this House. When did she find out about that report?

Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this report has been in the department. We have been working with it and have made changes to respond to the auditor general. There is nothing new, there is nothing exciting. What the report tells us is what first nations chiefs and the royal commissioners have been telling us, that indeed we do need to modernize social assistance, and we are doing it.

HEALTH

Mr. Greg Thompson (Charlotte, PC): Mr. Speaker, 12,000 Canadians suffer from hepatitis C. I want to remind members they are innocent victims of the Canadian blood supply system.

The question is pretty straightforward. I want to know from the government when it will announce a compensation package for these innocent victims.

Hon. Don Boudria (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I indicated to other colleagues a while ago and as the hon. member knows, a number of people, including organizations representing hepatitis victims, have testified before Justice Krever. We do not know yet whether Justice Krever has—

An hon. member: Oh, oh.

Hon. Don Boudria: If the hon. member from Edmonton can hold on a minute, perhaps I could answer another hon. member who deserves respect from this House.

The issue the hon. member raises is very important. We are looking forward to that report and recommendations of Justice Krever in that regard and with regard to the blood supply generally and anything else—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Charlotte.

Mr. Greg Thompson (Charlotte, PC): Mr. Speaker, I cannot believe that answer. They have been in power now going on five years. They dilly-dallied on this issue four, five years. Nothing to do with the Krever inquiry. They know they have a problem. They do not want to deal with it.

The question is when are they going to deal with it. These are innocent victims, 12,000 Canadians, who deserve an answer. They deserve that answer now, not five years down the road, not ten years, but now. When are they going to act?

Hon. Don Boudria (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on the day this report is tabled, the hon. member across pretends he cannot wait 15 minutes. He is using those victims for his own political ends. He can wait 15 minutes and listen to the report.

* * *

[Translation]

WORKERS RECEIVING TIPS

Mr. Yvon Charbonneau (Anjou—Rivière-des-Prairies, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Human Resources Development.

Oral Questions

The Government of Quebec recently announced measures to collect tax on the tips of restaurant and hotel workers. However, many people are concerned about how tips will be assessed for employment insurance purposes.

Could the minister tell us what the Government of Canada is prepared to do to make sure that the workers concerned can benefit to the maximum of the safety net provided by the employment insurance plan?

• (1450)

Hon. Pierre S. Pettigrew (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Government of Quebec advised us of its intention to tax tips. We then met with restaurant owners to discuss the situation.

The Minister of Finance and I have agreed to amend the employment insurance legislation by January 1, 1998, to make tips reported on a voluntary basis eligible and insurable under the employment insurance plan, without the requirement to first remit 20% of the amount to one's employer, which will make the life of restaurant owners easier. By working together, we can work in the best interests of Quebeckers.

* * *

[English]

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Earlier this week at the APEC summit the minister stated that to avoid irrelevance, the APEC agenda must include human rights.

Will this minister explain why the prime minister then knee-capped him yesterday by saying that the APEC agenda will never include human rights? Will the minister ask the prime minister to apologize to Canadians for his disgusting joke with APEC leaders about UBC students who were pepper sprayed while demonstrating for human rights in Indonesia, East Timor, China and other APEC countries?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in the run up to the APEC summit and during the summit, the prime minister, the ministers there and the Canadian delegation have been actively working toward an APEC that would be ensuring that its economic decisions were accountable to those who are affected by them.

It is important to note that the final declaration states "as leaders we are accountable to safeguarding and improving economic and social well-being, we commit ourselves to ensuring that APEC

remains responsive to our concerns". It demonstrates that the work of the prime minister and all the delegation has been very useful in helping APEC evolve.

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP): Mr. Speaker, one of the leaders who was laughing at the prime minister's joke was genocidal President Suharto whose government recently threatened Indonesian participants at the APEC people's summit if they demonstrated against Suharto.

Did the prime minister raise this issue with Suharto, in between jokes of course, and what steps is our government taking to ensure the safety of Indonesians threatened by Suharto's repressive regime?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we know that the hon. member has a very long history of super exaggeration. I think he has demonstrated this in his questions.

The fact is we have met continually with representatives of the people's summit. I can report to the hon. member that we have asked our embassy to make sure, regarding those Indonesian nationals who attended the conference, of what happened when they came back, and nothing has happened.

Once again we find the hon. member engaging in the highest form of exaggeration and misinformation.

* * *

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, quite a while back there was a request from a certain judge in the province of Alberta that there be an inquiry into the Stony Reserve because of some major problems. This minister denied there were any problems. She said they would take care of themselves, she was not going to dirty anyone's laundry. At a recent request she has said there are no problems. When I ask a question in this House she says there is no problem.

Does that mean that she finally learned that there are problems because she just received the report that we are talking about today?

Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I categorically reject every ounce and every word in the hon. member's comments. He talks about the need for an inquiry. That is one approach, to sit and wait and listen to see if there is a problem.

What we did was take action and implement strategies that help us deal with the past, the present and the future. This side wants to act and get results. That side just wants to talk and talk and talk.

Oral Questions

● (1455)

[Translation]

TELEVISION AND CABLE PRODUCTION FUND

Ms. Caroline St-Hilaire (Longueuil, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Canadian Heritage.

Having cut cultural funding by over half a billion dollars, the government created the television and cable production fund, which made it possible to produce high quality programs, and the cultural community says it is very satisfied with that formula.

Can the minister make a promise to this House, and keep it, that she will do everything possible to convince her finance colleague to renew this fund for several years in order to allow better planning in this sector?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would first of all like to thank all my hon. colleagues in the House for their support of the television and cable production fund. I can assure you that my colleague, the Minister of Finance, is so interested that he has already promised that, right after oral question period, he will meet with the group that came today.

I thank the minister and I thank all members who supported us in this initiative.

* * *

[English]

BANKS

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Qu'Appelle, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today it was the turn of the Bank of Nova Scotia to reveal record profits, \$1.5 billion, or an increase of 42% over last year, which is beyond even its wildest expectations.

Profits are fine if they are reasonable, but gouging the consumer is not fine.

I want to ask the minister whether he is willing to agree to a Parliamentary inquiry into bank services charges. I want him to throw away his script and answer the question. Yesterday he had the wrong script in his hand. He did not answer the question. Can he answer the question today?

Hon. Jim Peterson (Secretary of State (International Financial Institutions), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is entirely up to the industry committee if it wishes to look into this issue.

We have the banks before the committee four times a year. It is quite capable of running its affairs. I am sure if the member were there he would be able to ask these questions.

Let me put a few facts on the table. Taxes for Canadian banks are 64% of net income. In the U.S. they are 54%, in the U.K. 52%. For Canadian manufactures the taxes are 47% and for our credit unions they are 45%.

We are the government that imposed the temporary surtax.

* * *

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mr. Gilles Bernier (Tobique—Mactaquac, PC): Mr. Speaker, at human resources development offices across the country people who are going in to pick up their cheques are getting something extra. They are being asked to sign a computer printout with the names and cheque amounts of everyone else in their community getting a cheque.

The privacy commissioner has already started an inquiry.

Will the minister put a stop to this practice immediately, launch a full investigation and prosecute those responsible under the Privacy Act?

Hon. Pierre S. Pettigrew (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as members know, there is a postal strike in this country. As shown in the House today, the opposition seems to be satisfied with the answers of my colleagues.

Our department has set up 500 sites across the country where people can collect their cheques. I will look into the allegations of the member. We ask people to identify themselves for security reasons. We need to protect the integrity of the system.

I will look into the hon. member's allegation. We want to serve Canadians well.

* * *

[Translation]

QUEBEC'S CIVIL CODE

Mr. Denis Paradis (Brome—Missisquoi, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government is in the process of harmonizing its legislation with the provisions of Quebec's new Civil Code. Quebec is unique, not just for its language and its culture, but also for its legal tradition.

Can the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs tell the House what Quebecers and Canadians can expect from this important harmonization?

Hon. Stéphane Dion (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada has the tremendous good fortune to be a bilingual country with both its languages international.

Canada is also a multicultural nation, giving us many footholds throughout the world. Canada has access to Atlantic, Pacific and

Arctic civilizations. But Canada also has another strength that we can turn to the advantage of all Canadians, and that is Quebec's Civil Code, which makes us bilingual.

In order to turn this to best account, the Government of Canada will intensify the process of harmonizing federal legislation with Quebec's Civil Code, a project without precedent in the history—

The Speaker: The member for West Kootenay—Okanagan.

* * *

• (1500)

[English]

CANADA POST

Mr. Jim Gouk (West Kootenay—Okanagan, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, in this secure building the Minister of Public Works, who last August promised business he would act swiftly to legislate posties back to work if they went out on strike, has a guard posted at his office door.

I would like to know if that guard is there to protect him from angry CUPW workers for promising to legislate them back to work or to protect him from angry business owners for renegeing on that promise or to protect him from the Minister of Labour whom he keeps contradicting.

The Speaker: The question is out of order.

My colleagues, that would bring to a close our question period for today.

* * *

PRESENCE IN GALLERY

The Speaker: I draw the attention of hon. members to the presence in the gallery of some representatives from Canada's film and television industry.

We see you on our television and movie screens telling us our stories as Canadians, reflecting our values and playing out our dreams.

[Translation]

We are proud of your work and of your cultural achievements.

Dear colleagues, I present our Canadian stars.

[English]

I think today will be a rather busy day. I have a point of privilege. I received notice yesterday. I have at least one point of order that I know of. I will handle these matters before I get to the routine proceedings of the day.

The hon. member for Burlington.

Privilege

PRIVILEGE

MEMBER FOR YELLOWHEAD

Ms. Paddy Torsney (Burlington, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of personal privilege.

My rights and those of several of my colleagues have been violated by another member of this House of Commons.

On his instruction, the staff of the member of Parliament has deliberately harassed my colleagues and myself, thereby preventing me from doing my duties as a member of Parliament.

This is clearly an abuse of the facilities provided to all members of Parliament to fulfil their responsibilities to Canadians. There is no doubt that the staff member acted on behalf of his employer, the member for Yorkton—Melville.

The staff member has boasted of disrupting a private dinner comprised of duly elected members of this House, taking photographs and behaving in a threatening manner for the sole purpose of invading our privacy.

• (1505)

His antics need no further description as they are well documented in the *Ottawa Sun*. This is not a joke. It is a very serious harassment that needs your attention.

The member's staff clearly meant to intimidate and frighten my colleagues and myself. I must insist that this behaviour cannot be tolerated as appropriate activities by those people who are employed by us.

I believe I have a prima facie case of privilege, and if you so rule, I am prepared to move the necessary motion to refer this issue to the appropriate committee.

The Speaker: The hon. member for Burlington mentioned specifically the hon. member for Yorkton—Melville. I am not sure this is a question of privilege. I want to hear what he has to say.

Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, this is the first I hear of this. I know nothing about it. I think the member is obligated to give me some details regarding what she is talking about. I know nothing about this.

The Speaker: I need a little more information. I address the hon. member for Burlington. Could you identify for me, my colleague, which if any, parliamentary procedure was involved in this so-called intimidation?

Ms. Paddy Torsney: Mr. Speaker, I apologize. I have the wrong Mr. Breitkreuz. It is the member for Yellowhead.

An hon. member: Apologize.

Routine Proceedings

Ms. Paddy Torsney: The part where I said I am sorry was an apology.

The Speaker: Evidently, the hon. member in her statement has misidentified one member of Parliament for another. She has said from her seat that she apologizes, that in her statement she was talking about the hon. member for Yellowhead.

I am going to let you say something but then I am going to come back to this.

Mr. Garry Breitkreuz: Mr. Speaker, when a member rises on a question of privilege and accuses another member directly of this, is there not some obligation to have her in fact at least resemble something to the truth? I find this just abhorrent.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

An hon. member: Shame.

The Speaker: My colleagues, it is a question of privilege of one of our colleagues here after all. We are all involved in this, all of us.

May I please ask for your indulgence. I want to get more information. I wonder if the hon. member would consider perhaps approaching me in my Chambers to give me more information. I will reserve judgment until I get more details.

I am going to go to a point of order.

* * *

POINTS OF ORDER

QUESTION PERIOD

Mr. Randy White (Langley—Abbotsford, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, you called my colleague from West Kootenay—Okanagan out of order. I think as a matter of information to my colleagues and to the House, I would like you to explain to us what exactly the order was where he was out of order.

The Speaker: It is not common practice for the Speaker of the House to give his reasons for what he does to the House. You have empowered me with this.

From what I could hear, the hon. member was talking about security. I, as Speaker of the House, am responsible for security in the House. From what I could make out in the preamble, he was talking about the security of the House. I ruled that to be out of order. From my understanding, that is where it was going. I have to make these decisions on pretty short notice. I stand by my decision.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1510)

[*Translation*]

WAYS AND MEANS

NOTICE OF MOTION

Hon. Jim Peterson (Secretary of State (International Financial Institutions), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to lay upon the Table a Notice of Ways and Means motion to amend the Excise Tax Act and a related act, as well as explanatory notes on the preliminary bill and regulations pertaining to the GST and HST.

I ask that you designate an Order of the Day for the consideration of the motion.

* * *

BLOOD SYSTEM IN CANADA

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour today to table the final report by Mr. Justice Krever, in three volumes, entitled "Commission of Inquiry on the Blood System in Canada: Final Report".

* * *

[*English*]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Peter Adams (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to standing order 36(8), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's responses to three petitions.

* * *

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE.

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Mr. Peter Adams (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present the 13th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs regarding the changes the committee recommends to Private Members' Business.

This report would not have been possible without the energy and conviction of the members of the subcommittee on Private Members' Business at the Procedure and House Affairs Committee in both the present legislature and the 35th legislature.

I commend the work of the subcommittee and the committee members on this and hope that all members of the House will appreciate the complexity involved in proposing amendments on such a process.

It is our hope that these changes will further strengthen the role of private members in the House.

* * *

[Translation]

CANADA POST CORPORATION ACT

Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-290, an act to amend the Canada Post Corporation Act (membership of Board of Directors).

He said: Mr. Speaker, in this period of negotiations at Canada Post Corporation, we may have an even greater awareness of the necessity for the composition of the board of directors of the Canada Post Corporation to require the creation of an advisory committee to handle decisions of an administrative nature which might be made by the corporation, particularly on questions relating to rural post offices.

(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed)

* * *

PETITION ACT

Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): moved for leave to introduce Bill C-291, an act to provide for petitions presented to the House of Commons that have 250,000 or more signatures to be subsequently prepared as bills so far as possible and introduced in the House.

He said: Mr. Speaker, this bill aims at ensuring greater public involvement in decisions taken by Parliament and satisfaction for a significant proportion of the population, 250,000 people, signing a petition expressing a desire for legislation.

(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed)

* * *

• (1515)

[English]

PENSION BENEFITS STANDARDS ACT, 1985

Hon. Jim Peterson (Secretary of State (International Financial Institutions), Lib.) moved for leave to introduce Bill S-3, an act to amend the Pension Benefits Standards Act, 1985 and the Office of the Superintendent of Financial Institutions Act (Review Committee).

(Motions deemed adopted and bill read the first time)

Routine Proceedings

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Mr. Ken Epp (Elk Island, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to give notice of the following concurrence motion:

That the 13th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, presented on Wednesday, November 26, 1997, be concurred in.

This is a notice of the motion to come.

* * *

PETITIONS

INCOME TAX ACT

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have one petition today from Saint John, New Brunswick.

The petitioners would like to draw to the attention of the House that managing the family home and caring for preschool children is an honourable profession which has not been recognized for its value to society.

They also point out, as did the National Forum on Health, that the Income Tax Act discriminates against families that choose to provide care in the home to preschool children because it does not recognize the real costs of raising those children.

The petitioners therefore pray and call upon parliament to pursue initiatives to eliminate the tax discrimination against families that choose to provide care in the home for preschool children.

CRIMINAL CODE

Mr. Bob Mills (Red Deer, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to present a petition signed by 312 people from my riding of Red Deer.

Parliament's recent amendments to the Criminal Code in response to the Daviault and Seaboyer cases, as well as amendments to deal with stalking and harassing conduct, reflect public policies underlying the law which requires males to take responsibility for their violent behaviour toward women.

Therefore the petitioners request that parliament review and change relevant provisions of the Criminal Code to ensure that individuals take responsibility for their violent behaviour toward others.

I met with these people and certainly believe this law must be changed.

The Speaker: I remind all members that it is not necessary to support or not support petitions.

PAY EQUITY

Mr. Gordon Earle (Halifax West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition concerning pay equity. The petition has been

Routine Proceedings

signed by several people from various communities in Nova Scotia: Halifax, Dartmouth, Fall River, Beech Hill, Windsor Junction, et cetera.

It points out that the Canadian Human Rights Act includes provision to end pay discrimination against women by making equal pay for work of equal value the law.

The petitioners call upon parliament to put an end to pay discrimination by implementing the results of the joint study through negotiations with the Public Service Alliance of Canada, the union representing the workers that are grieving.

* * *

• (1520)

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Peter Adams (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Nos. 16, 19, 27 and 28.

[Text]

Question No. 16—**Mr. John Cummins:**

With regard to the 1995 fishing season on the west coast: (a) did all sport fishing lodges provide catch data directly to Fisheries and Oceans as required by the Fisheries Act, (b) which lodges refuse to directly provide the catch information, (c) which lodges were charged for refusal to directly provide catch information, (d) which charges were dropped or stayed and why and (e) did the Minister of Fisheries or any member of his staff meet with any officials or representatives of those lodges charged prior to the dropping or staying of charges?

Hon. David Anderson (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.): (a) All sport fishing charter operators, which includes sport fishing lodges, except the two indicated in part (b) below, supplied the requested catch information to Department of Fisheries and Oceans, DFO, either directly or through the Sports Fish Institute.

(b) There were two sport fish charter operations which did not provide the requested information to DFO either directly or through the Sports Fish Institute. They were: Mr. George Ardley, owner/operator of River Lodge, Rivers Inlet, B.C.; Oak Bay Marina Ltd. which operates various sport fishing enterprises including the King Salmon Lodge and the M.V. Marabell in the Rivers Inlet area, B.C.

(c) Both sport fishing charter operations indicated above were subsequently charged.

(d) The charges filed against Oak Bay Marina Ltd. were stayed. These charges were for failure to provide DFO with information requested by a fishery officer pursuant to section 61(4) of the Fisheries Act, thereby committing an offence contrary to section 78(a) of the Fisheries Act.

The Department of Justice stayed the proceedings on the grounds that evidence had come to the attention of the crown counsel handling the case, after the charges were laid and before the trial, that provided the company with a clear defence of officially induced error to the charges.

Specifically, DFO had arranged that fishing lodges could provide catch records to the Sport Fishing Institute of British Columbia. This arrangement was made to allow lodges to provide the information to DFO if they preferred not to do so directly.

However, due to an administrative oversight in Oak Bay Marina Ltd., two of their lodges were not informed of the arrangement and they consequently refused to provide the data to fishery officers. Furthermore, local fishery officers had not been informed by DFO management about the arrangements which had been put in place. In crown counsel's opinion the confusion provided a defence of officially induced error.

After weighing all factors, Department of Justice officials in Vancouver determined that it would not be appropriate to take up needless court time in the circumstances. The circumstances were discussed with Department of Fisheries and Oceans officials who agreed with the course of action.

(e) Yes, on unrelated issues.

Question No. 19—**Mr. John Cummins:**

With regard to the refusal of sport fishing lodges owned by the Oak Bay Marine Group of Victoria, the M.V. Marabell and King Salmon Resort, to provide the Department of Fisheries and Oceans catch data during the summer of 1995 as required by Section 61 of the Fisheries Act: (a) on what dates were verbal requests made from the Fisheries charter vessel Hook Line 3 and what was the response; (b) on what dates were verbal requests made from the Fisheries charter vessel Francis M and what was the response; (c) what was the date of the first boarding of the M.V. Marabell by Fishery Officers to request the catch data and what was the response from the lodge; (d) what was the date of the issue of a letter to the M.V. Marabell requesting the catch data and what was the response from the lodge; (e) what was the deadline contained in the latter requesting the catch data from the M.V. Marabell and was the deadline met by the lodge; (f) following the expiry of the deadline what was the date of the second boarding of the M.V. Marabell by Fisheries Officers and what was the response from the lodge; (g) what was the date of the first boarding of the King Salmon Resort by Fisheries Officers to request catch data and what was the response; (h) what was the date of the issue of a letter to the King Salmon Resort requesting catch data and what was the response; (i) what was the deadline contained in the letter requesting the catch data from the King Salmon Resort and was the deadline met; and (j) following the expiry of the deadline, what was the date of the second boarding of the King Salmon Resort by Fisheries Officers and what was the response from the lodge?

Hon. David Anderson (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.): (a) The charter vessel *Hook Line 3* made a verbal request of the *King Salmon Resort* on July 29, 1995. The *King Salmon Resort* refused to provide information. The *Hook Line 3* made no verbal requests of the *M.V. Marabell*.

(b) The charter vessel *Francis Mr.* made no verbal requests of the *King Salmon Resort* or the *M.V. Marabell*.

(c) The first boarding of the *M.V. Marabell* by fishery officers to request catch data was on August 1, 1995. The operators refused to provide the requested information.

(d) The letter to the *M.V. Marabell* requesting catch information was first served on August 1, 1995. There was no specific response to this request.

(e) The deadline in the letter was that requested catch information was to be provided by August 6, 1995. This deadline was not met.

(f) The second boarding was on August 9, 1995. The captain of the *M.V. Marabell* had been advised in writing by his employer not to provide the catch data. However, catch information was subsequently provided to the Department of Fisheries and Oceans through the Sport Fishing Institute by the end of November 1995.

(g) The first boarding of the *King Salmon Resort* by fishery officers to request catch data was on August 2, 1995. The operators refused to provide the requested information.

(h) The letter to the *King Salmon Resort* requesting catch information was first served on August 2, 1995. There was no specific response to this request.

(i) The deadline in the letter was that the information be provided by August 6, 1995. This deadline was not met.

(j) The second boarding of the *King Salmon Resort* was August 7, 1995. The captain of the vessel had been advised by his employer not to supply the department with catch data. However, catch information was subsequently provided to the Department of Fisheries and Oceans through the Sport Fishing Institute by the end of November 1995.

Question No. 27—Mr. Rick Borotsik:

With regard to the Agriculture and Agri-food Canada "At Work in Rural Communities" resource kit, (a) what was the breakdown of the exact cost of production and distribution; and (b) what categories of people received a copy of the kit?

Hon. Lyle Vanclief (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Lib.): The resource kit, called Canada— At Work in Rural Communities is a package of information about federal programs and services, designed to help all members of Parliament and federal public servants to better serve the information needs of rural Canadians.

Canadians in small communities and rural areas do not have the same access to information as Canadians in urban centres. The kit is one part of a pan-government communications effort, developed under the leadership of the rural secretariat in Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, to address this issue.

Routine Proceedings

The kit represents the work of 14 federal departments and agencies, and includes more than 100 fact sheets with program details, contact numbers and Internet addresses. The fact sheets are organized according to the government's priorities for rural development: partnerships with rural communities, rural youth, access to information and capital, and improving the business environment.

There are two versions of the kit. One is a permanent binder, sent to members of Parliament and senators, which can be updated. The other is a cheaper Cerlox version, distributed to well over 1,300 frontline federal offices across Canada where rural Canadians go for government information. That includes Community Futures offices, Canada Business Service centres, Human Resource Centres of Canada and other locations where the federal government comes into direct contact with rural Canadians. An Internet version is available on Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's web site, and an electronic version, by end of the season, will have travelled to 155 rural fairs across the country as part of the 1997 rural exhibits program, which some 10 million Canadians attend.

Total costs to develop, design and produce the kit in binder, Cerlox, Internet and CD ROM versions were approximately \$200,000. The main contractor was Innovacom Marketing and Communication of Hull, Quebec. It competed with two other design companies and won the contract to create the rural "look", used on the resource kit, the rural Government of Canada kiosk and supporting materials. The company also provided advice as to materials and suppliers.

Distribution costs totalled about \$5,800.

Question No. 28—Mr. John Reynolds:

With regard to permits issued by the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, (a) how many were issued for each of the years from 1993 to 1997 (to date); (b) what constitutes a "compelling reason" for issuing such a permit; (c) what is the most often cited reason for issuing such a permit for each of the years 1993 to 1997 (to date); (d) does the Minister personally review every case where a ministerial permit has been issued; (e) who, other than the Minister, has authority to issue such a permit; (f) what is the nature and extent of background checks on those individuals who receive permits; (g) how many ministerial permits have been renewed at their expiry date since 1993; (h) for what average period of time have these renewals been extended; and (i) how many individuals who have received such permits have been living in Canada longer than ten years?

Hon. Lucienne Robillard (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.): a) The number of permits issued for each year from 1993 to 1996 is as follows:

Year	Number
1993	10,069
1994	7,263
1995	5,482
1996	4,007

The number of permits issued in 1997 will be reported to Parliament by the minister as required by subsection 37(7) of the Immigration Act.

Routine Proceedings

b) All cases must meet this condition. The reasons that compel the department to issue permits vary. Often the presence of the permit recipient is required to help workers in Canada produce goods and services, e.g. to deliver goods to a manufacturer or to provide training. Hastening or allowing family reunification in special circumstances, e.g. pregnancy of an immigrating spouse, while continuing processing applications for immigrant visas or landing is another typical reason. They are issued for humanitarian and compassionate reasons in order to allow individuals who would otherwise be inadmissible to enter Canada. The department does not issue permits unless the risk to Canadian society of the recipient's presence in Canada is minimal.

c) The most often cited prohibiting section of the Immigration Act for permits issued in each year from 1993 to 1996 is A 19(2)(d). This section describes people who "cannot or do not fulfil or comply with any of the conditions or requirements" of immigration legislation or any orders or directions lawfully made or given under the legislation. It is a very broad class of inadmissibility. Permit holders in this class are not inadmissible for any of the other reasons specified in section 19 of the Immigration Act, e.g. medical, criminal or security reasons.

d) No, the minister does not personally review each case of permit issuance.

e) The minister has delegated authority to issue permits to the positions listed in Instrument I-1 attached. In cases of medical or serious criminal inadmissibility there are restrictions on the delegation of authority. These restrictions ensure permit issuance is monitored by CIC's headquarters.

f) If the permit recipient applied for permanent residence, the nature and extent of background checks are identical to those for immigrant applicants, i.e., medical, security and criminality. If permit recipients are seeking temporary entry and are inadmissible for criminal acts, police records are checked. If permit recipients are seeking temporary entry and are inadmissible for medical reasons, they will have undergone a medical examination.

g) 16,699 permits for 11,433 persons have expired and been renewed since January 1, 1993. Of these permits only 3,781 were still valid on October 28, 1997.

h) The average period of renewals since January 1, 1993 has been 72 weeks or 506 days.

i) Only 570 of the people whose permits have been renewed since January 1, 1993 have been in Canada for longer than 10 years.

I-1

Delegation of authority under sections 37 of the
Immigration Act

1. Pursuant to the provisions of section 121 of the Immigration Act, I hereby authorize the following persons, and, in their absence, the persons who act for them, to issue a written permit authorizing any person to come into or remain in Canada pursuant to subsection 37(1) of the act. I also authorize these same

persons to extend or cancel a permit pursuant to subsection 37(4) and to direct such a person to leave Canada pursuant to subsection 37(5) of the Immigration Act.

National Headquarters

Assistant Deputy Minister, Operations
Director General, Enforcement
Director General, Case Management
Director, Security Review
Director, Organized Crime
Director, Case Review

Regions in Canada

Regional Executive Directors/Directors General
Directors General/Directors, Immigration
Area Managers
Managers, Branch Managers and Assistant Managers Canada
Immigration Centres
Managers, Assistant Managers, Case Processing Centres
Operations Supervisors, Mississauga

B.C./Yukon Region

Managers: Inland Operations, Port of Entry Operations, Hearings and Appeals

Overseas

Officers in charge of visa offices outside Canada

2. Pursuant to the provisions of section 121 of the Immigration Act, I hereby authorize the following persons, and, in their absence, the persons who act for them, to issue, pursuant to subsection 37(1) of the act, a written permit authorizing the following persons to come into or remain in Canada:

a) In the case of persons seeking to come into Canada, persons who are members of the inadmissible class described in paragraph 19(2)(d) of the Immigration Act and of no other inadmissible class;

b) In the case of persons in Canada, persons with respect to whom a report has been or may be made under paragraph 27(2)(a) by reason of the person being a member of the inadmissible class described in paragraph 19(2)(d), or under paragraphs 27(2)(b) or (e), and under no other provision of the Immigration Act.

I also authorize these same persons to extend, pursuant to subsection 37(4) of the act, a permit issued to the said person.

Regions in Canada

Senior Immigration Examining Officers
Supervisors of Immigration Counsellors, Case Presenting Officers, or Examining Officers, Enforcement Program Coordinator
Supervisors of CIC Operations, British Columbia/Yukon Territory Region
Team Leaders, Case Processing Centres

Quebec Region

Expertise officers

3. Pursuant to the provisions of section 121 of the Immigration Act, I hereby authorize the following persons, and, in their absence, the persons who act for them, to make a removal order pursuant to subsections 37(5) and (6) of the act.

National Headquarters

Deputy Minister

Assistant Deputy Minister, Operations

[*English*]

Mr. Peter Adams: I ask, Mr. Speaker, that the remaining questions be allowed to stand.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

Mr. Peter Adams (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I ask that all Notices of Motions for the Production of Papers be allowed to stand.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

REQUEST FOR EMERGENCY DEBATE

CANADA POST

The Speaker: I am in receipt of a notice of motion under Standing Order 52 for an emergency debate from the hon. member for West Kootenay—Okanagan.

Mr. Jim Gouk (West Kootenay—Okanagan, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I rise once again in accordance with Standing Orders 52(1) and 52(2) to seek leave for an emergency debate on the question of the post office situation.

I made this application last Thursday. You ruled at that time that it was a relatively new strike and it was not in your opinion an emergency at that point in time but that perhaps later it would be.

The strike has now been going on for a week. There does not seem to be any guarantee, certainly, or even any realistic likelihood that it is coming to an end. Therefore I think it is appropriate to request your consideration again, not so we can talk specifically about back to work legislation but so we can get all the issues on the floor.

We are hearing conflictions about how much the strike is costing business. We are hearing conflictions about how much unemployment it is causing. We are even hearing conflictions from various ministers on their position.

I would like all members of the House to put their concerns on the floor and discuss them rationally to see what solutions we can come to.

Government Orders

The Speaker: The hon. member rightly points out that he has already asked for an emergency debate on this topic. He was kind enough to send me a second letter with his reasons for asking for an emergency debate at this time.

I am still of the view at this time that it does not meet the requirements for an emergency debate.

Mr. Jim Gouk: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. For my guidance so that I do not waste the time of the House or yourself, could you tell me what would constitute an emergency for this purpose?

The Speaker: I am sure the hon. member will put forth another motion at some other time and at that time I will decide if it constitutes reason for an emergency debate.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

CANADA PENSION PLAN INVESTMENT BOARD ACT

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C-2, an act to establish the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board and to amend the Canada Pension Plan and the Old Age Security Act and to make consequential amendments to other acts, as reported (with amendment) from the committee.

SPEAKER'S RULING

The Deputy Speaker: There are 25 motions and amendments standing on the notice paper for the report stage of Bill C-2.

Motions Nos. 4, 6 and 7 are the same as amendments presented and negated in committee. Accordingly, pursuant to Standing Order 76.1(5), they have not been selected.

The other motions will be grouped for debate as follows:

Group No. 1: Motions Nos. 1, 3, 5, 21, 23 and 24.

[*Translation*]

Group No. 2: Motion No. 2.

[*English*]

Group No. 3: Motion No. 8.

[*Translation*]

Group No. 4: Motion No. 9.

[*English*]

Group No. 5: Motions Nos. 10 and 12.

Group No. 6: Motions Nos. 11, 13 to 19 and 22.

● (1525)

Group No. 7: Motions Nos. 20 and 25.

Government Orders

The voting patterns for the motions within each group are available at the table. The Chair will remind the House of each pattern at the time of voting.

I shall now propose Motions Nos. 1, 3, 5, 21, 23 and 24 to the House.

Mr. Peter Adams (Peterborough, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there have been consultations among all parties and I believe you would find unanimous consent for an order of the House that would deem all amendments that have been found in order at the report stage of Bill C-2 to have been read by the Chair and to have been duly moved and seconded and to further provide that, when there is no further debate, the amendments will be deemed to have been put and a recorded division requested.

The Deputy Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: Accordingly, Motions Nos. 1, 3, 5, 21, 23 and 24 have been deemed to have been read, moved, seconded and put to the House.

MOTIONS IN AMENDMENT

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Qu'Appelle, NDP) moved:

Motion No. 1

That Bill C-2, in Clause 8, be amended by adding after line 21 on page 4 the following:

“(3) The Governor in Council may appoint a panel of experts to review the conflict of interest procedures established by the board of directors under paragraph (2)(b) and to recommend changes to those procedures.

(4) The Governor in Council may direct the board of directors to adopt any of the recommendations of the panel of experts and to ensure that any procedures adopted are made available to the public.”

Mr. Jean Dubé (Madawaska—Restigouche, PC) moved:

Motion No. 3

That Bill C-2, in Clause 42, be amended by replacing lines 40 to 42 on page 21 with the following:

“appointed for a term of five years by the board of directors, and may be removed at any time by the board of directors for cause.

(1.1) If the board of directors decide to remove the auditor before the auditor's five-year term ends, the board of directors must notify the appropriate provincial Minister of each of the participating provinces giving the reasons for the decision.

(1.2) The auditor may not be removed unless at least two thirds of the participating provinces having in total not less than two thirds of the population of all of the participating provinces has agreed in writing to the removal.

(1.3) An auditor who resigns before the end of the five-year term shall notify the board of directors, the Minister and the appropriate Minister of each of the participating provinces giving the reasons for the resignation and make those reasons available to the public.

(1.4) Where the auditor has resigned or been removed, no person or firm shall accept an appointment or consent to be appointed as auditor until the person or firm has requested and received from the other auditor a written statement of the circumstances and reasons why the other auditor resigned or why, in the other auditor's opinion, the other auditor was removed.

(1.5) Notwithstanding subsection (1.4), a person or firm may accept an appointment or consent to be appointed as auditor if, within fifteen days after a request under that subsection is made, no reply from the other auditor is received.

(1.6) Unless subsection (1.5) applies, an appointment as auditor is void if subsection (1.4) has not been complied with.”

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.) moved:

Motion No. 5

That Bill C-2, in Clause 47, be amended by replacing lines 10 and 11 on page 25 with the following:

“47. (1) The Minister shall cause a special examination to be carried out at least once every six years in respect of the”

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.) moved:

Motion No. 21

That Bill C-2, in Clause 91, be amended by adding after line 22 on page 72 the following:

“(4) The Investment Board and its auditor shall provide the Auditor General of Canada with any records, accounts, statements or other information that in the opinion of the Auditor General of Canada are necessary to audit the annual financial statements of the Canada Pension Plan.”

Mrs. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary—Nose Hill, Ref.) moved:

Motion No. 23

That Bill C-2, in Clause 94, be amended by replacing line 19 on page 74 with the following:

“subsection (5), and after reasonable public hearings before the House of Commons standing committee on Finance, by regulation amend the”

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Qu'Appelle, NDP) moved:

Motion No. 24

That Bill C-2, in Clause 96, be amended by replacing lines 24 to 26 on page 81 with the following:

“period in which the report is prepared;

(d) set out the manner in which that contribution rate was calculated; and (e) describe how the contribution rates presently set out under this Act will affect the income level of future retirees as well as their income share relative to the income of those working.”

Government Orders

He said: Mr. Speaker, I want to say a few words on a couple of the motions I have presented under Group No. 1 before the House at this time.

The first motion we are dealing with asks to establish a panel of experts to review the conflict of interest procedures established by the board of directors. We are talking about the board of directors of the new investment fund that will be established.

We believe it is very important that there be an independent panel of experts which will help to set up a court of conflict for the boards. The reason is that we want to make sure the board is as independent as possible from the government. It seems wise to have an independent panel of experts. It makes it more independent from the government. It is fairer, more transparent and something that should be done. I hope the government across the way would be willing to consider it.

In committee a number of amendments were moved. On many of the amendments in committee the four opposition parties were in agreement but the government did not accept them. It has now had a chance to think about another whole series of amendments. I hope this time around it will be a bit more receptive to some of the wise ideas coming from the opposition parties in the House.

The second amendment I am moving in Group No. 1 is Motion No. 24. This will establish a new reporting requirement by the chief actuary in terms of how he or she reviews the Canada pension plan.

Right now the actuary only focuses on costs. In the future the actuary should focus as well on forecasting the income of seniors. That has not been done. What will be the income of seniors in 20 years or 30 years? That is a very important aspect of the bill before us today. Those are the kinds of things I believe should be done.

We support the idea of a pay as you go plan, but a number of things in the new Canada pension plan bill are not fair and not progressive. There have to be a number of changes to make the plan more progressive. It is important to say that at the beginning of the debate.

For the most part the Canada pension plan cannot be amended without the support of two-thirds of provinces representing two-thirds of the people of the country in addition to the federal Parliament of Canada.

When the provinces were negotiating with the government a while back, the federal government obtained the support of eight of the ten provinces. The two provinces not in support of the amendments being made to the Canada pension plan are the provinces of Saskatchewan and British Columbia, both of which have NDP governments.

I come from Saskatchewan and want to and do reflect, on behalf of my party, a number of concerns of those two governments about

the amendments moved at committee stage and again here at report stage. Now we are finding that there is going to be a rapid escalation in the premiums facing workers and employers of this country. In fact over the next three years after this bill takes effect on January 1 there will be an increase in premiums of some 73%. That is a rapid escalation in premiums that will be very difficult to meet by a number of people.

• (1530)

It is particularly going to be difficult for the self-employed and more and more people are self-employed. The self-employed have to pay both sides of the premiums, the employer and employee premiums. Instead of being the current 5.3% or 5.4%, in six years they are going to have to pay 9.9% of their earnings in terms of CPP benefits. That is going to be very difficult for the self-employed and very difficult indeed in terms of many workers who are receiving wages at the lower end of the scale.

We are also very concerned that the whole thing is not progressive enough, that the basic yearly exemption of \$3,500 is no longer going to be indexed. From 1966 on, that exemption was always indexed so that when the cost of living went up, the basic exemption also went up, giving a bit of a break to low income people. That is going to be eliminated and it is going to be a hardship on a great number of people across this country.

On the other hand, the maximum on which one has to pay contributions is going to be \$35,800 per year. We are suggesting that that should be increased as well so that people who are making more money, such as members of Parliament, senators, the Minister of Finance or many of the wealthier people in this country can pay a greater share of those CPP benefits.

Again that was a suggestion made by two of the governments during the round of negotiations on changes to the Canada pension plan. It is another area which I believe we should look at.

The contributions are going up and they are going up in a very regressive way. That regressive way is also going to hit generationally as younger people, many of whom are not in the workforce yet, are going to be paying more and more in order to pay the CPP to people who are retired or who are going to retire in the next five or ten years. That is also very unfair.

On the side of the benefits, on the side of the recipients we are also seeing very regressive changes under the amendments to the Canada pension plan. The benefits are going to drop. They are going to drop in particular for low income people, the majority of whom of course are women in this country.

We are also going to see a drop in the survivor's benefits. With respect to the survivor's and death benefits, once again most of those recipients are women because women live longer than men. There are more widows than widowers. It is going to discriminate

Government Orders

against women in this country. That of course is a concern to us as well.

Those are some of the concerns we have about the changes that are being made to the Canada pension plan. We strongly believe in a public pension system in this country. We do not believe as the Reform Party is suggesting that we should privatize the whole thing or abolish the existing Canada pension plan or the public pension plan and move to a super RRSP plan.

If we do that, what do we do with the so-called unfunded liability of \$600 million that is going to increase to over \$1 billion within a few short years? How do we do that? How do we cover that? Those are questions that have not been answered appropriately in terms of getting rid of the Canada pension plan, in terms of a radical solution for the problem that is facing us today.

The other thing that should be pointed out is that the Canada pension plan is not strictly a pension plan. In fact it is misnamed. It should really be the Canada pension and insurance plan. A lot of the money, about one-third of it, is paid out for insurance benefits. It is somewhere around that amount. When we are looking at insurance benefits in terms of CPP disability, which by the way will be harder to get under the amendments, survivor's benefits, death benefits and all of these other benefits are really insurance benefits.

If we were to privatize the Canada pension plan, what happens to the insurance side of it? Those questions have not been answered.

I do not think those are amendments that should be seriously considered at all by the Parliament of Canada. The important thing is to make sure that this country has a very strong public pension plan.

• (1535)

CPP in its first 30 years has been a great social program in terms of helping to redistribute some income in Canada. If we look at the statistics we find that the number of seniors who are living in poverty is a lot lower today than it was in 1966 when the Canada pension plan was first formed. Any regressive change in the CPP in terms of who has to pay the premiums and who will get the benefits is something which is not going in the right direction.

On behalf of my party I have recommended a whole series of amendments, two of them in this particular group, which will help improve the Canada pension plan to make it more transparent, to make it more accountable.

An independent group that would advise on the code of conduct is something the government can certainly live with. It is not going to detract in any way, shape or form from the Canada pension plan to have an independent group to advise on how to set up the code of

conduct and look at conflict of interest rules for the board of directors of this new investment fund.

The new investment fund is going to be a big fund. It will eventually be over \$100 billion, perhaps the largest investment fund or largest pension fund in this country in a few short years. It is important that there be very stringent, very transparent conflict of interest rules. Some of the people who will be investing in that fund will be involved in other investment organizations. It is very important that they be at arm's length from any kind of conflict of interest.

Those are some of the reasons why I am moving these amendments. I hope the government will be receptive to some of these amendments. I am reminded that the government across the way had the vote of only 38% of the people so the majority is actually on this side. Therefore, the government should take some of our advice very seriously.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean Dubé (Madawaska—Restigouche, PC): Mr. Speaker, the motion I moved that is currently under study concerns the mandate of the auditor of the investment board.

We in the Progressive Conservative Party are very concerned about the problems this issue raises, because the Canada pension plan investment board will have huge responsibilities and power. It will oversee the billions of dollars invested by Canadian employers and employees. It will be playing with the financial future of thousands and thousands of Canadians.

Transparency and accountability are therefore of the utmost importance if we want to ensure this sizeable fund is well managed. This is why we wanted to clarify the provisions of clause 42 of Bill C-2.

[*English*]

We first start our amendments to clause 42 by extending the auditor's term from one year as it presently stands in the bill to five years. The one year term set out in Bill C-2 is too short a term to allow for continuity. With such an important fund it does not make sense to allow the possibility to change auditors every year. It does not make for sound administrative practices. We want to make sure the funds will be properly managed and allowing the auditor to have a five year term will help in achieving that goal.

The second amendment we would make on clause 42 is to stipulate that removing the auditor can only be done with just cause. As it stands now, clause 42 says that the auditor of the board may be removed at any time by the board of directors. This is clearly insufficient.

Government Orders

[*Translation*]

This provision clearly needs clarification because, as it stands now, it would allow the auditor of the board to be removed at any time, without just cause and without anyone having to account to anyone as to the reasons for doing so.

Such vagueness, such discretion invites abuse of power on the part of the board of directors, and that cannot be permitted.

[*English*]

What we propose is that the board of directors may remove the auditor at any time. However they must do so with cause and those causes must be made public.

In our amendments, disclosure provisions start in subsection 1.1. It stipulates that if the board decides to remove the auditor it must notify the appropriate provincial minister of each of the participating provinces of that removal. The board must also provide the provincial ministers with a reason for that removal.

• (1540)

It is important to note here that the provinces are an important and integral part of the Canada pension plan. Yet under the current bill they need not be made aware of such an important issue as the reason to remove the auditor or even the removal itself.

It is true that under clause 43 provinces are informed of the resignation or removal of the auditor. However this is only when the auditor herself objects to her removal or has to resign because of differences with the board. The provinces are therefore made aware of a done deed and they have no power to change anything.

That is why we went one step further in our amendments. In subsection 1.2 of our amendments we indicate that the auditor may not be removed unless at least two-thirds of the provinces representing two-thirds of the population agree in writing to that removal.

I hope that my colleagues understand and acknowledge that corporate auditors such as will be the auditor for the CPP board are there to protect shareholders, not the board of directors. The same principle ought to be applied to the Canada pension plan investment board. Furthermore, the protection of shareholders is a recognized principle in Canadian law.

Our amendments reflect this widely used principle such as is found in section 344 of the Insurance Companies Act which requires shareholders to be told the reasons for the auditor's dismissal and to vote on that dismissal. In our case, the provinces stand in as proxies for the shareholders with the standard two-thirds rule replacing the shareholders meeting. Similar rules are part of the Bank Act of Canada, the Canada Business Corporations Act and the Trust Companies Act.

In subsection 1.2 I explained the process to be used in case an auditor is removed by the board. Subsection 1.3 explains the process to occur when an auditor resigns. In this case our amendment would require that the auditor notify not only the board of directors of a resignation, but also must notify the minister and the appropriate minister of each of the participating provinces. Notably the auditor would also be required to provide the reasons for the resignation and the auditor must make those reasons available to the public.

This is again common practice in a corporate world and those principles should be applied to the Canada pension plan investment board.

[*Translation*]

To ensure full disclosure of the circumstances of the removal or resignation of an auditor, we provided for the requirement for any new auditor to obtain a written statement from the outgoing auditor. This statement would state the circumstances and reasons of the resignation or removal.

It is important to note here that something is missing in French version of subsection (1.4), as compared to the English version. On the third line, we should read "d'avoir demandé et obtenu" instead of just "d'avoir obtenu".

This would reflect the English wording "has requested and received". This is an omission that has an effect on subsections (1.5) and (1.6).

Now getting back to the relevance of subsection (1.4), as I explained earlier, there are practices in the corporate world that should be applied to the operation and management of the Canada pension plan investment board.

It is a matter of transparency and accountability. We want to ensure that the funds entrusted to the investment board will be managed properly and that reputable administrative practices are used.

By providing that the incoming auditor must ask the other auditor why he or she resigned or was removed, we are echoing a provision of section 345 of the Insurance Companies Act.

It is so important that the new auditor comply with this requirement that he or she cannot accept this appointment without first having received the written statement of the circumstances and reasons behind the other auditor's resignation or removal.

• (1545)

In clause (1.5), we make an exception to clause (1.4). If the new auditor did indeed request a written statement from the former auditor, but that the latter did not provide a reply within 15 days, the new auditor may nevertheless accept his appointment as auditor. This would avoid having too long a period without an audit being conducted.

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In clause (1.6), we reiterate that an appointment as auditor is void if clause (1.4) has not been complied with. For example, if a person accepts an appointment as auditor without having requested a written statement from the former auditor, the appointment will be void.

To conclude, this explains the amendments provided in Motion No. 3 now before the House. As I mentioned at the beginning of my comments, these clarifications to clause 42 of Bill C-2 have to do with the mandate of the auditor of the investment board. Our amendments help ensure the board's transparency and limit the powers of the board of directors, for the benefit of Canadians as shareholders of the fund.

I urge all hon. members to support the motion.

[*English*]

Mrs. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary—Nose Hill, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the name of my riding is quite appropriate today since I have a bad cold. That is another story.

Today begins a very gripping debate on proposed amendments to Bill C-2. Those Canadians who watch the proceedings of this House will probably want to be reminded that Bill C-2 deals with the proposed changes by the government to the Canada pension plan.

This stage of the proceedings is called report stage where the bill is reported to the House. Amendments are proposed to the bill for the House to vote on. Then the bill goes into third reading or final debate stage before it is voted on.

These are amendments now that we are talking about today to the CPP bill. There are six groups of amendments and we are now discussing Group No. 1.

Group No. 1 has six different amendments in it. I assume they are all grouped together because they deal with accountability. Under this bill there is a big fund of money set up and it is managed by people who will be talked about later.

This group of amendments talks about how the fund managers need to report and account for their actions. There were six amendments put forward to deal with this. These were not the only amendments to deal with the way the fund managers operate and are accountable.

There were quite a number of amendments, as the previous speaker mentioned, put forward at the committee stage. All those were voted down by the Liberal majority even though, as has been said, the opposition was, in a rare show of good sense, unanimous in supporting the amendments which would have made the account and its management a great deal more open and transparent.

Considering that they have in their hot little hands a large chunk of our retirement security, one would think that the more we can do

to make this thing open and accountable and transparent, we would be eager, willing and prepared to do that.

Unfortunately there does seem to be some reluctance on the part of some members from the government to do that.

Let me talk briefly about the six amendments that have been put forward because I support all but one of them, just so the public knows what the opposition and the government are proposing to make this fund a little more accountable.

The first motion is the one that has been spoken about by my colleague from the NDP. Essentially what that does is say that the cabinet can set up a panel of experts to review the conflict of interest procedures which the directors, the board that manages this fund, put into place.

• (1550)

In a sense the cabinet appoints the fund managers and this amendment says the cabinet can appoint some experts to breath down the necks of the fund managers. In a way it is political appointees looking over the shoulder of other political appointees.

I suppose we could wish there were a bit more arm's length arrangement to all this. However, it is a step in the right direction. At least somebody, even if a political appointee, is going to look over the shoulders of these board managers and it seems to me that gives us at least another kind of avenue of comfort to know that somebody has some review mechanism or review responsibility for these conflict of interest procedures.

We certainly do not want these conflict of interest procedures to be like the cabinet conflict of interest procedures we heard much about but have never seen. There seems to be this sort of talk about conflict of interest procedures but nobody sees them, nobody really seems to be able to make sure they are followed. It would be very useful, at least in this case, to move in that direction.

So we do support that amendment by the NDP.

The next amendment is one by my colleague from the PC party. We have just heard about this, so I will not go on at any length. Instead of an auditor being appointed every year, year by year, it gives the auditor a term of five years.

There are two important things here. One is of course that the auditor has some staying power in this whole scheme of things. There is no revolving door of auditors where someone comes in cold. This is a huge fund. It manages literally billions of dollars and it does take some knowledge and expertise to do a proper audit.

So rather than having a possible revolving door of auditors, there is somebody who has a grip on the thing and some stability and some tenure and who can look after it. As the proposer of the amendment mentioned, if the auditor were not doing their job, they

could certainly be booted out the door before five years, but there would be some good reason to do so.

The other thing to mention is that this five year term, generally speaking, would outlive a government, so to speak. We would not have quite so much of the auditing of the thing tied to whomever is in power at a particular time. I think this is an excellent amendment and should be supported.

The third amendment is by the government. I do not know if the government intends to speak to it. It is a good amendment.

The act presently provides that a special examination of the operations of the board may be carried out at least once every six years. In other words, there may be no special examination at all. This amendment changes "may" to "shall" so there has to be a special examination at least once every six years. Again, it is a step in the right direction. This is our retirement at stake. To mandate a special examination on top of some of the other accountability measures surely would not be amiss. So we support that.

The government is also bringing in what I call the amendment from the hon. member from Prince George—Bulkley Valley because that member of the Reform Party challenged the finance minister in question period on the fact that the auditor general was not the entity or the person with the audit responsibility for this huge fund.

It seems strange to us that Parliament appoints an auditor general to oversee the operations of government but somehow this huge fund of billions of dollars had its own auditor whom the board, appointed by the cabinet, chose. We feel very strongly that the auditor general should have every ability and every bit of information necessary to conduct his own audit of this fund, and this amendment would allow that.

We commend the government on this amendment. In fact, it is the very first time it has agreed to such a measure, because in committee it turned all these kinds of measures down.

• (1555)

However, now that the auditor general has had a word with it, the government has recognized that it cannot have an auditor general of a country and have an aspect of the operations of government, particularly such a large aspect, not explicitly subject to his operations.

With respect to the motion I have introduced, it would require that the schedule of rates charged under the CPP, the contribution levels, not be changed except after reasonable public hearings. Presently the act says it can be changed by cabinet. We say no. If people are going to have to pay more bucks they should at least get to say something about it. We say there would have to be public hearings before changes are made.

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I would like to have said a few passionate words about Motion No. 24, but unfortunately I do not have time. However, the motion has been ably spoken to by the NDP member and I will leave it at that.

I believe these are good amendments and I hope they will be supported by the House.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak at the report stage of Bill C-2, which creates Canada pension plan investment board and which carries out an in-depth reform of the Canada pension plan.

It is important, I think, to begin with a brief overview of the key elements which led up to the drafting of this bill. The first point I would like to speak to is that the Canada pension plan had got pretty well out of date and no longer really met the needs. It was headed toward an incredible deficit. It was absolutely vital for a decision to be taken in order to remedy the situation.

I am rather proud that they turned to Quebec in order to see what had been done with the Quebec pension plan. An equivalent pension plan was created in 1964, in the early sixties, during the term of Prime Minister Pearson whose view of federalism allowed Quebecers the leeway to create institutions specific to them if they so wished. They did so in the area of pensions with the creation of the Quebec pension plan which, moreover, has always performed better than the Canada pension plan.

At the same time, the decision was made to manage pension funds and other funds, but particularly the pension funds, by creating the Caisse de dépôt et placement. Some 30 years later, along comes the federal government with the decision to create a similar body so as to have a satisfactory yield from the investments made.

The bill to create the Canada pension plan investment board is, therefore, a sort of practical and concrete acknowledgement of the efforts that have been made in Quebec. There might be a lesson to be learned here by the present government on the leeway that should be given to Quebec on the issue of social programs, and perhaps in another three, four or five years, before Quebec becomes sovereign, we will have been able to make a contribution to the implementation of other still more satisfying programs.

Today, at report stage, we need to look particularly at a number of amendments made by various parties. We have to see whether they would improve the act. I refer particularly to Motion No. 5, the one tabled by the government, which says that, when the auditor general needs to make a special audit, the government is committed to a special audit every six years. I think this is an outcome of the work done in committee. It is an amendment proposed by one of the opposition parties. It was not accepted at

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first reading, but the government agreed to dig a little deeper. Today we have this motion, which, like Motion No. 21, will ensure better distribution of information. Thus these motions may be interesting.

The same is true of the NDP motion on conflict of interest. I think, with the size of the amounts managed by the Canada pension plan investment board and by the whole new Canada pension plan, it is clear that conflicts of interest must be prevented and that everything will be done legally and appear to be done legally.

The Conservatives have also tabled an amendment. It aims at ensuring increased autonomy for the auditor general.

• (1600)

We must look in greater detail; we must analyze it properly to ensure it is not already included in other provisions of the bill.

The first group of amendments therefore contains a series of clauses intended to improve the bill, according to how you look at them. This leads us to the realization that the bill will achieve a certain consensus across Canada.

Unfortunately, the Reform Party has a whole other view, that of privatizing the entire pension plan. I think this view is not in tune with our values of social justice. In this regard, I think that the Reform Party should listen to the public some more to make sure its position is the right one.

I would like to point out that the Canada pension plan covers some 12,000 people in Quebec. The others are covered by the pension plan of Quebec, which has already carried out a consultation similar to that being done by the Government of Canada. The two plans have certain identical elements. This is relevant, because it makes it possible to transfer the plans of people who have worked in Ontario or another anglophone province to Quebec, should they move there. To a certain extent, this is automatic, which is useful.

It also allows members of the Canadian armed forces and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police to be covered under the Canada pension plan. This is a practice that has caused problems in the past. It shows that, as far as Quebecers are concerned, the main pension plan is the Quebec pension plan. It is the plan under which almost everyone is covered. For the 12,000 individuals involved, it may be important, but on the whole, Quebecers are much more interested in the Quebec pension plan.

I would also like to bring to the attention of the House the fact that these amendments to the Canada pension plan come within the scope of a more comprehensive reform of the retirement income system, which includes the Canada pension plan, or the Quebec pension plan in Quebec, and old age security and guaranteed income supplement.

In this regard, the Bloc Québécois has very serious concerns about what the existing pension plan will be replaced with. Just as people currently covered by this plan, who are already receiving benefits under the plan, are assured that existing conditions will be maintained, so will those currently receiving what is commonly known as old age pensions.

Under the plan to be established, on which broad consultation should be conducted, starting in 1998, it will be important that both young people and those in their forties have an opportunity to select a pension plan with full knowledge of the facts and that a plan that does not provide for intergenerational balance, which is one of the objectives of the pension plan currently being considered, not be imposed on them.

This is an element that can be found in Bill C-2, the Canada pension plan bill, and this principle is also included in the Quebec pension plan reform. Efforts are made to create a better intergenerational balance, by increasing premiums now so that everyone can contribute as much as possible toward what they will be getting out of the system later. This way, there is no surprise and younger generations will not have to pay disproportionately for retirees who contributed less in the past, percentage-wise. This applies to baby boomers in particular.

There are interesting adjustments in this regard in the bill. There are the amendments that we find in the first group. These are interesting features that will make it possible to improve the legislation, after the stages we have seen so far, that is, consultation in all provinces, recommendations resulting from this consultation, and the work in committee, where we heard from groups who came to make representations along the lines of what is contained in a number of amendments.

I think that it is important not only that the Canada pension plan be more effective than in the past, that it match the effectiveness of the Quebec pension plan, but that there also be an appearance of fairness, and amendments such as that of the NDP, for instance, to ensure better management of conflict of interest.

• (1605)

I think this is important and interesting because the system introduced will be in place for many years. There has been no reform of the Canada pension plan since it was first introduced. We are therefore looking at a system that will have to work for 10, 20 or 30 years. We must make sure that the bill will be the best possible.

I hope the government will give it the necessary attention, because opposition parties have taken a constructive approach so as to ensure it is the best bill possible. This is what we want to continue to do with the suggestions made today.

I urge the government to pay attention to the votable motions among the group of amendments so that, in 10, 15, or 20 years, the system is successful and so that people can be as proud in Canada, whatever it looks like then, of the results achieved as we are of the

Quebec pension plan. In any event, compared to the CPP, the QPP has done well, and the federal government has recognized this, judging by what we see in the bill.

[*English*]

Mr. Tony Valeri (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think it is important that we restate again today at report stage of Bill C-2, which is amendments to the Canada pension plan, that Canadians from all walks of life want assurances that the CPP will really be there when they need it and when they retire. They want assurances that it will never be taken away from them.

I think these are legitimate aspirations that everyone from all sides of the House shares. What we are doing is of course making sure that the financial sustainability will never again be at risk, that in fact the CPP funds will be invested in the same way as the private pension plans and that Canadians start to receive regular statements of their pension and earnings.

Specifically on the motions in Group No. 1, Motion No. 1 in particular talks about the conflict of interest procedures. I think it is important to note that the board's conflict of interest procedures will be made public and that will be subject to scrutiny not only of experts, but also the public at large. The conflict of interest provisions contained in the legislation are widely regarded by experts to be quite stringent.

I want to make a point of clarification. The first speaker as we kicked off the debate today at report stage made a point that the investment board was not independent. I want to state again that that is not true. It is an arm's length board.

The board will be working for the best interests of the plan members. In fact the whole basis of establishing this board is to ensure that it is an arm's length board and that there is accountability built into that board.

There was the comment about how women were being treated unfairly. It is important that we make reference to the gender analysis that was put forward that showed that in fact women would receive \$2.56 of benefits for every dollar of contribution.

Motion No. 3 talks about appointing the auditor for a five-year term. I think it is also important that we make the point that it is standard corporate practice to appoint an auditor for one year, but nothing is preventing the board from reappointing that auditor for subsequent terms.

In the case of resignation or removal of the board's auditor, the act already requires that a statement explaining the reasons for the

resignation or removal be sent to the finance minister and the finance ministers of participating provinces.

There has to be a reason for the resignation or removal by the board and that provides the accountability and the transparency. Again, I want to reiterate that the board is an arm's length corporation.

I want to make reference now to the two proposed amendments that the government has put forward, the first of which will in fact clarify that the auditor general will have access to all the information that he considers necessary to conduct his overall audits of the CPP. On the basis of this change, the auditor general has indicated that he is satisfied with the audit provisions of Bill C-2 and has written to the finance committee chair to this effect.

The second amendment will require that the CPP investment board be subject to special examination at least once every six years. Bill C-2 currently provides for special examinations but it does not specify the fact of minimum frequency.

• (1610)

I want to restate that these amendments are a result of the committee work and the contributions that the various members of the committee have made in the discussion on Bill C-2. The fact that we are moving to put a timeframe on the special examination once every six years is a slight change from the original motion that was put forward in committee.

That change is there to coincide with the review that is to take place every three years. The auditor general would have to perform a special examination on the second triennial review so if there were any challenges to the plan, the Minister of Finance would be able to address them at that time.

I have some additional information about the board and its accountability since there has been a fair amount of discussion in this first part of the debate on Group No. 1 on the accountability to Parliament and to Canadians.

The legislation makes the investment board fully accountable to Parliament and to the Canadian public. Experts in pension fund governance have praised the accountability provisions of Bill C-2 for being extremely rigorous. The Ministers of Finance and Human Resources Development will be required to prepare an annual report on the CPP which will be tabled in Parliament and also sent to the provincial finance ministers. The report will include the audited financial statements of the CPP investment board as well as the report of the auditor general in those statements in his overall audit of the CPP.

The amendment we have made clarifies a provision that was included in the bill already. It merely clarifies for the House that

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the auditor general would have had access to any and all information that would be required to complete his audit of the consolidated financial statements of the Canada pension plan.

We have responded to the issues that a number of members of this House have made with respect to the auditor general's access to information by bringing forward these two amendments. These amendments also address the request for the auditor general to conduct these special examinations over a period of time. We have indicated that every six years would be suitable since at the second review of the plan the finance minister would be able to address any issues of concern.

The board will keep Canadians well informed of its investment activities. It is important for us to tell Canadians that the board will be managing this large pool of money in a very transparent fashion. Canadians will be fully aware of this. The board will make Canadians well aware of its investment activities by making its investment policy standards and procedures public, releasing quarterly financial statements, publishing annual reports and the board's members will be holding regular meetings in each province to allow for public discussion and input with respect to their work as members of the investment board.

I will comment briefly on the last motion which is related to Motion No. 23. It requires that any changes to contribution rates resulting from the three yearly reviews by the federal and provincial governments be subject to public consultation by the finance committee. The finance minister has stated over and over again that any major changes to the Canada pension plan in the future will be subject to consultation with Canadians and that all changes to contributions require the consent of two-thirds of the provinces and two-thirds of the population.

Any changes large enough to require legislation would always be referred to an appropriate committee of the House for review as a matter of course.

• (1615)

Therefore there really is no need for this proposed motion. The process is already in place. It is a standard process and one that the Minister of Finance is on record as stating he asked for.

With respect to the motions which were put forward in the first grouping, I want to say that certainly every member of this House is committed to ensuring there is financial sustainability in the Canada pension plan. The changes to Bill C-2 are responding to the public consultations which took place over a period of time. Canadians had an opportunity for input and to talk about what they would like to do and would like to see happen with respect to the Canada pension plan. The message was overwhelmingly that they wanted to have the Canada pension plan sustainable, safe and in place for them in retirement. The changes in the amendments being put forward in Bill C-2 speak to those concerns of Canadians.

I look forward to the speedy passage of this bill so we can continue to do our work in ensuring that we reflect the priorities of Canadians as we move forward.

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the parliamentary secretary has thoroughly covered the report stage motions in Group No. 1. I would like to add a couple of notes for the benefit of all members.

As members know, the chief actuary in his 15th report, his last report, let it be known that the Canada pension plan would not be sustainable past the year 2015 unless certain changes were made. That is one of the reasons we are here today.

As a result of that report and as a result of the prescribed reviews of the Canada pension plan, discussion documents were prepared. Extensive cross Canada consultations were held with all vested interests, with seniors, women, labour, corporations and everyone who wanted to appear before the panel, who sought input into changes or options that could be made with regard to the Canada pension plan.

Canadians should be assured that these changes which have come before the House on Bill C-2 are as a result of exhaustive consultation with Canadians across Canada.

By law any change to the Canada pension plan requires the approval of at least two-thirds of the provinces representing not less than two-thirds of the population of the country. All of the proposed changes which are coming forward in Bill C-2 have received the requisite support from the provinces. Canadians should be assured that this is clearly as a result of extensive consultation and has the full support of the majority of the provinces of Canada.

It is also important to assure all members, particularly today's seniors who are current beneficiaries of the CPP and any other Canadians who receive other benefits such as disability benefits, that their current benefits will not be affected by the changes being considered by the House under Bill C-2. It bears repeating that seniors should be assured that their current benefits under the Canada pension plan will not be affected.

The parliamentary secretary dealt with many of these points. I will simply move on and repeat that the benefits as a result of these changes under the CPP will continue to be secure. They will continue to be guaranteed. They will continue to be indexed so that all Canadians can enjoy the benefits of the Canada pension plan for generations to come. That is the reason we are here.

Finally, with regard to the Canada pension plan investment board, members should know that one of the features of the current plan is that funds accumulated by the plan have been invested in provincial bonds at federal rates. To ensure that Canadians get the lowest possible rates of premium to pay into the plan, one of the big

changes being proposed is the creation of the Canada pension plan investment board, a board selected in consultation with the provinces. Its members are experts in investment. The board will ensure that the funds received by the Canada pension plan will be invested as wisely as possible to earn the optimal return for the benefit of all Canadians.

• (1620)

Canadians should be assured that the changes being made here respond to the concerns raised by the chief actuary and respond to the needs of all Canadians that the Canada pension plan system will be there for generations to come.

Mr. John Solomon (Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased as a member of the New Democratic Party to participate in this debate.

I stand in this House in support of two motions that the NDP have put forward to improve Bill C-2. I refer specifically to Motion No. 1 in Group No. 1. This motion will replace with an amendment where the government may set out an independent panel of experts to review publicly disclosed and externally enforceable conflict of interest rules.

Why would we propose these changes? An independent panel of experts should help set up a code of conduct for the board of directors. I know the Liberals are very concerned about having codes of conduct because whenever that phrase is used, the Liberals seem to get caught breaking all the rules of the code of conduct.

I am absolutely petrified, apprehensive and not confident in what the Liberals are saying. They are telling this House and the people of Canada that Canadians can be assured that the Liberals are undertaking a program that will benefit them. Let me talk for a few minutes about how Canadians are so sure of the Liberal record when it comes to social safety programs.

Members and other Canadians may recall members of Parliament who preceded us in this Chamber, members in high regard, members like Major James Coldwell, a CCF member of Parliament from Regina. Many years ago members will recall the names of J.S. Woodsworth, Stanley Knowles and Tommy Douglas. What these four CCF and NDP members of Parliament had in common was that they did not rest assured with assurances from Liberal governments previous to this one that they were going to support the benefits of Canadians in their later years.

As a matter of fact, these individuals, Woodsworth, Coldwell, Douglas and Stanley Knowles, fought tooth and nail for all of their political careers stretching some 35 years in a certain member's experience, fighting for pensions for Canadians. And who opposed those pensions? It was the Liberal Party, Liberal governments in the past and before that Conservative governments. If it was not for

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these four individuals and many other like-minded Canadians, we would not have a pension program in this country.

When I hear the Liberals opposite stand in their place and say rest assured Canadians, we are going to look after you, I think Canadians should be doubly aware and doubly concerned about something rotten in the state of Canada with respect to this pension plan. The record is very clear.

What I want to talk about in respect of these amendments is why does the government not support an independent panel of experts being created to outline a code of conduct for the board of directors? Is it because it is going to appoint the wealthy friends of the Minister of Finance? Is it going to appoint people like Conrad Black, a good friend of the prime minister of this country? They golf together, ride horses together and do all sorts of things together. What they do have in common with respect to all of Canada is that they tend to put the screws to those on the lower income scale. That is unacceptable in this day and age in this country.

Why are the Liberals not supporting such an amendment for a code of conduct? I think people should ask that question. When Liberals give them assurances that they are protecting their interests, I do not think those assurances are sufficient.

The true test of progress in our society somebody once said is not whether we add to the abundance to those who have much, but whether we provide enough for those who have too little. With respect to this test of progress on this bill and these amendments that the government is opposing, the Government of Canada is falling far short of passing this test of progress. It is not providing enough for those who do have little. What it is doing is making sure that those who have abundant incomes and assets are going to maintain and roll those assets at an accelerated scale at the expense of those who have very little.

• (1625)

The second amendment the NDP is putting forward is Motion No. 24. We are suggesting that there be a requirement for the chief actuary to forecast income from public benefits of future retirees relative to the earnings of those who are working. Why the change? Because we have an actuary who has been instructed by the Minister of Finance, and some people refer to him as the Scrooge of Canada and others have more unflattering names, but we will not get into those because we do not want to get into name calling at this point.

Why not allow the actuary and some of these Canada pension plan employees to provide some analysis of the costs of the plan and the benefits to seniors and older Canadians who will qualify for this pension? Why can they not share information publicly which would outline what retirees will receive 15 and 20 years down the road? It has projected what we are going to be paying, it has projected what it is going to cost, but it will not tell Canadians the

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truth about how much they will receive for paying for all these benefits.

I am asking the government to reconsider. If it really believes what it says that it is going to assure Canadians that it has the confidence of all of the provinces, then it will undertake to support these amendments.

I might add when the member opposite stood in the House and said that he had the support of two-thirds of the provinces, that eight of the ten are supporting Bill C-2 unamended, how many are from the CCF-NDP form of government? Not one. Who did the NDP and the CCF fight tooth and nail, year after year, decade after decade to obtain pensions? The NDP and the CCF fought the Liberals year after year, decade after decade for pensions on behalf of seniors. We were able to obtain the pension plan in the country after many decades of fighting and now they are asking why the NDP province of Saskatchewan, where I come from and represent, and the NDP province of British Columbia are not supporting the bill.

Canadians should be asking this question of themselves. They should be asking this question of the Liberal members of Parliament. When the Liberal members go back to their ridings constituents should ask them why the NDP provinces, the NDP who fought for pensions in this Parliament and this country are not supporting Bill C-2? Why are they not embracing all these changes?

An hon. member: Tell us.

Mr. John Solomon: We will get into that later in the other amendments, but I think my time is running out. We have all sorts of information that we want to share. I am sure all members are open minded and very willing to listen to some of these suggestions and recommendations. I certainly look forward to sharing them.

Mrs. Michelle Dockrill (Bras d'Or, NDP): Mr. Speaker, like my colleague from Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre, I stand today and support Motions Nos. 1 and 24 in Group No. 1 on behalf of Atlantic Canada.

Coming from Atlantic Canada I have a difficult time understanding why the government would not want to support Motion No. 1. We in Cape Breton have been very well aware of government patronage over the years. I have to say that when I hear the government talk about priding itself on openness and accountability, this is a surefire way to ensure that accountability and openness. We have seen years of patronage. This is like allowing the mouse to mind the cheese.

What is really important is that this will ensure a balance between the private and public aspects of the so-called changes to

the CPP which are going to benefit all Canadians. I must say there is a large number of seniors in my riding of Bras d'Or and they are not as confident that these changes are going to benefit them.

With respect to Motion No. 24, it is quite simple. It is asking the chief actuary to do the job the government has not been able to do or has refused to do. It is the right of Canadians to be told what the fund is going to cost them and what benefits they will receive or what benefits they will lose. As I said, Mr. Speaker, my comments were going to be brief and hopefully we will get an opportunity at a later date for some of the other what I see as really good amendments.

• (1630)

The Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to the order made earlier this day, all the motions in Group No. 1 are deemed to have been put, recorded divisions deemed requested and deferred.

We will now proceed to debate on the motions in Group No. 2. Pursuant to the agreement reached earlier this day, the motion in Group No. 2 is deemed proposed and seconded.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean Dubé (Madawaska—Restigouche, PC) moved:

Motion No. 2

That Bill C-2 be amended by deleting Clause 37.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I would like to explain to members of this House why it is imperative to delete clause 37 of Bill C-2, which reads as follows:

37. The Board and its subsidiaries shall invest their assets in such a way that tax would not be payable by them under subsection 206(2) of the *Income Tax Act* if Part XI of that Act applied to them.

Pursuant to this clause, the Canada pension plan investment board should act as if it were governed by the provisions of the *Income Tax Act* dealing with the foreign content of pension plan portfolios. This means that the new board would not be allowed to invest more than 20% of its assets outside Canada.

Because we believe the board should have the power to make investments that will best protect the interests of the plan's beneficiaries, clause 37 must be struck from the bill.

In fact, the government should increase and even eliminate the limit put on foreign investments, instead of extending it to other types of investments. We must make sure the board is free to choose the investments likely to provide the best return, regardless of any political consideration.

Also, maintaining restrictions on foreign content could trigger major problems.

First, limiting investments abroad could prevent the board from building a portfolio that is sufficiently diversified to reduce financial risks. We all know that this issue is an important one and that it is time to restore Canadians' confidence in a pension plan that was once their pride.

Second, this constraint also has the effect of reducing the competitiveness of Canadian businesses. Knowing that there is a large and secure capital base on which they can rely, they have less motive to be effective and efficient than if they were in direct competition with foreign companies.

Third, and this is certainly an important concern, it prevents Canadians from receiving a fair return on their pension savings: their money is tied up in a stock market that represents only 3% of the capital in the global market.

Quoted in the Ottawa *Citizen*, Professor James Pesando from the University of Toronto summarizes and illustrates better than I can the concerns that were raised. He said, and I quote:

[*English*]

“You have heard that expression ‘don’t put all your eggs in one basket’. Just imagine that the CPP fund in the extreme case was invested only in Canadian stocks and bonds and then in 2005 Quebec secedes. That would be devastating in terms of its impact on share prices and bond markets in Canada”.

[*Translation*]

Professor Pesando continued:

[*English*]

“Think about what would happen if 50% of those funds were invested offshore. Not only would they continue to do well, but the drop in the Canadian—would mean the returns would be magnified”.

• (1635)

[*Translation*]

It is not complicated: Bill C-2's provisions setting out the rules on the portfolio's foreign content deprive Canadians of over \$700 million annually. By eliminating clause 37, that is by eliminating these rules, the market value of the Canada pension plan could increase by 20 to 25%. This is no small amount. I would even say it is significant.

The government should stop limiting potential investments by millions of Canadians and should act to eliminate this outdated and archaic requirement.

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It is in fact that same government that is saying to these same taxpayers that they should be more responsible in financing their retirement. I am saying that the government should act more consistently.

During the electoral campaign last spring, the Progressive Conservative Party clearly stated that it wanted changes to the rules governing registered retirement savings plans in order to gradually eliminate restrictions on foreign investments.

Its main argument at that time also applies very well to the issue of the Canada pension plan today: Canadians have the right to seek the best possible return from the market.

To achieve this, it is essential that the investment board be allowed to make its investments in the best interests of the Canada pension plan's beneficiaries.

That is why I urge my colleagues in this House to vote in favour of this motion.

[*English*]

Mrs. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary—Nose Hill, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, this amendment may be one of the single most important amendments which have come forward. I believe nearly every witness I heard at committee commented on the management and investment of our retirement fund. They said that this 20% rule should be changed, that it should be lifted. This amendment, of course, would do that.

Currently, pension funds in Canada are limited with respect to freedom of investment. Only one-fifth or 20% can be invested offshore.

To put this in context, the global capital pool is very large and Canadian investments comprise only 3% of it. In other words, Canadians are expected, indeed forced, to put almost all of their investments upon which their retirement security depends into a very small capital pool. This does not give us the best return and the best security.

As the member who just spoke indicated, it substantially limits the kind of return we can hope to achieve. It does not maximize the investment return which we can hope to achieve.

This is particularly important for poorer Canadians. People who have money, who have companies registered offshore, who have family trusts and all of those good things can diversify their assets to the point where this rule does not substantially hurt them. However, for lower income Canadians who have almost all of their retirement savings invested by these mandatory payments into the Canada pension plan, this restriction and the consequential limitation of the investment return they hope to receive means a great deal. If we want to provide particularly low-income Canadians with a secure portion of retirement that they can count on, we simply have to get rid of this 20% foreign investment rule.

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• (1640)

As I said, this is not just something that a couple of opposition parties are talking about, although certainly if we think so, that should be persuasive. We are joined by almost every single witness that appeared before the committee, including actuaries, accountants, pension fund managers, economists, analysts of all kinds, some of the most respected thinkers in this country.

I wish that it was the finance minister's name on here as the mover of this amendment. That would indicate that we were going to get this matter taken care of. Since it was an opposition member who had the wit and the courage to put this forward, I would certainly hope that all members of the House would support this amendment. If they do not support any other one, I would say this is the one to support, particularly for the benefit of the most vulnerable members of our society who need the best return we can possibly give them on their pension and retirement investment.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Mr. Speaker, today we can situate this amendment within a context in which the Canada pension plan has, in the past, not had a very high yield when reinvesting the money paid into it. The reason for this is certainly that the cost-effectiveness of the plan was not really an objective, unlike Quebec's Caisse de dépôt et placement, which was intended to increase the yield on its investments as much as possible.

Today, then, in reading the proposed amendment, we see there is a continuity with this, in the desire for the investment board to try to solve this problem of profitability of the plan's investments.

It is, however, important to carry out a fairly detailed analysis, because the section of the act they wish to do away with says that the funds invested by the investment board must be handled differently than that invested in registered retirement savings plans. What is not said is that the 20% rule cannot help but be changed, but this will be done by considering all of the tax implications, for the RRSPs as well, and perhaps even other implications there may be within the Canadian federal taxation system.

So, the question we should be asking today is whether this is the right time to be changing the rules of the game in this bill, when no similar change will be made to RRSPs. In my opinion, parliamentarians should look at this with a concern for co-ordinated and logical taxation in Canada.

The investment board will surely permit a better return on investment, because it has been given the criteria for economic performance. In terms of investment objectives, types of invest-

ment, the only remaining constraint concerns the 20% maximum during the time the tax legislation in question applies.

So we see that within this no undue pressure is being applied to investment choices if, suddenly, tomorrow or in the coming years the board could invest as it likes outside Canada.

• (1645)

However, if this option is not available through RRSPs, we will end up with a double standard. The government will no longer be behaving like an employer and a lawmaker, but as an investor and a lawmaker and will not be giving private pension plans parity and the chance to the same investments. I think that at that point we could run the risk of making this sort of amendment.

So I think it would be better, in the context of the pre-budget consultations currently underway for the next budget, to take a look at the relevance of giving everyone equal opportunity. As the bill now stands, the day the tax system is changed, this amendment will apply to RRSPs, as it will to the Canada pension plan investment board.

This would, in my view, be more ethical and would avoid putting the government in a difficult situation vis-à-vis the representations that might be made to it in the amendments to come regarding RRSP rules. When the door is opened, it must be opened for everybody, so that the change will affect everyone equally, so that the government and private investors who must now contend with the 20% rule in every other sector will start off on an equal footing.

So, for these various reasons, we do not think it advisable to make this amendment today. It will be necessary to verify whether the change will be made for all investment programs affected.

In conclusion, the Canada pension plan investment board is the cornerstone of this bill. A major effort is already under way to obtain a better return on the money invested by the public in the CPP. Investments will be carefully monitored and special studies to evaluate effectiveness will also be possible. I think that now is not the time to remove the equality that will exist among the various investment vehicles. This change would be more appropriate in the context of a fiscal debate.

[*English*]

Mr. John Solomon (Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to say a few words on Motion No. 2. I want to say a few words because I am a bit puzzled with respect to my colleagues who are moving this and supporting this motion.

The premise that the Reform Party and the Conservative Party put forward with respect to this issue on Canada pension plan amendments is they want Canadian taxpayers to give tax deductions to individuals and businesses that make CPP contributions,

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give tax breaks in Canada, yet they want the money invested outside Canada.

I do not understand the rationale for this. Maybe they have not heard of the Hang Seng or Tokyo or some of the other foreign markets that seem to be in a little turmoil.

It seems to me if tax breaks are going to be given in Canada for deductions with respect to pension plans, then maybe the money should be invested in Canada to support the businesses that are hiring people and building our country. I do not understand this.

However, the Reform and the Conservatives talk about back to the future. They are winding the clock back to 1897, 100 years back to the future when it was archaic. I think it is outrageous what they are proposing.

Let us just clarify this one more time. The Conservative Party is the party of Brian Mulroney and Grant Devine and the harem that is now in jail. We have the Reform Party which is the party of Grant Devine and Brian Mulroney. They want to support tax expenditures in this country to invest outside our country for their friends. Who are their friends?

• (1650)

An hon. member: Call them the reverse party.

Mr. John Solomon: We know who their friends are. Their friends are people like Conrad Black. My colleague across the floor from the Liberal Party says that the Reform Party should be called the reverse party. That is probably a suggestion others have as well. Others suggest that maybe it is the reformatories, we do not know. There are many things people use to refer to these individuals and their parties because they keep wanting to reform and change the way Canadians govern themselves, the way we have built our country, the way we have encouraged small business to build up this country from the grassroots.

Reformers are like ostriches with their heads in the sand who say that they are close to the grassroots. The problem is they are buried in the sand and do not understand what grassroots is all about. If you ask anybody in this country if we should give tax deductions to Canadians to invest outside our country they will say "I don't think so". If we are going to give tax deductions, we would rather give them to Canadians to build our economy, to reinvest in our communities, to reinvest in our small businesses.

I am puzzled as to why the Reformers are proposing this. The only conclusion is they are very supportive of these individuals who have lots of money. My advice to them is that if they want to invest outside of Canada, they should take their own money out of their own pockets, out of their own farms and businesses if they have them and go and invest in Fukuoka, Japan or in Kumamoto,

Japan or in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia or go and invest in Indonesia. There are some good gold stocks in Indonesia they could probably invest in. I do not happen to have any because I do not do that sort of thing. I have problems enough, as most Canadians do, investing in things they know, never mind in countries they have never heard of before.

We must look at this proposal by the reformatories and defeat it as quickly as possible.

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to add a couple of points with regard to this report stage motion which deals with restriction on foreign investment. Currently investments are restricted to 20% foreign content. That rule applies to other pension plans. It is the same rule that applies to personal RRSPs. As the previous speaker said, these are all instruments or vehicles under which Canadians get tax consideration for having made those investments.

The rhetorical question to ask is should the Canada pension plan investment fund have different rules or latitude from that extended to other investors providing for their retirement through registered pension plans or RRSPs. I have some concerns that the differential may lead to some adverse consequences and some challenges simply because the rules are not consistently applied in Canada.

The issue of the borrowing requirements of Canada has to be taken into account in view of the fact that the Government of Canada is not borrowing anymore. Although the deficit is not totally eliminated at this time, the non-cash charges mean the government is in a position where it is not a player in the market. It does not have an appetite for new capital at this time other than for debt that is maturing and has to be rolled over.

There are some dynamics that occur in the marketplace. Although Reform has indicated Canada is only 3% of capital markets, it is still a substantial marketplace in which there is broad latitude to invest.

It would appear to me that nobody in this House can support this motion. I will check it. Motion No. 2 basically states that clause 37 be deleted. Clause 37 is the clause that states that the investment shall be subject to the same rules that are applied to RRSPs.

• (1655)

It appears to me that if the clause is deleted so that the 20% rule does not apply, in the absence of anything else, that means there would be unrestricted foreign investment. I do not know how anybody in this House could leave this bill in the shape where the investors of the funds of Canadians, the Canada pension plan, could invest anywhere they wanted, totally outside of Canada. I will check that. If that is the fact, I doubt there is anybody in this House who can support Motion No. 2.

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Mr. Ken Epp (Elk Island, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I have just a few words to say in response to what the hon. member for Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre was saying.

He made some references to Reform and some of them were a little unkind. I want him to know that as a fellow hon. member I respect him anyway. I hope he learns to clean up his thinking. That will then clean up his speaking.

I would like to say a few words about this whole general concept. There is this anti anything outside Canada bias by some people. Yet we find, for example, the Liberal government at a snap of a finger will lend \$1.5 billion to China to finance a nuclear reactor, a country which has not signed on to any nuclear non-proliferation agreement, a country which does not comply with environmental standards, a country which we presume will maybe some time pay back this \$1.5 billion by goods it produces or whatever. We hope that is true. The government is thinking it can do that with taxpayer money.

If we are going to say we do not want to do that, that we are going to do everything inside Canada only, I think we will entirely lose our trade. Very frankly one of our strongest trading partners is also one of our strongest economic partners, the United States. If we are able to invest some of our retirement money in the United States, it has to be at least as secure as the money invested in Canada in most instances. It seems to me rather arbitrary to say that we should not do this.

There is another aspect to this that is very important. There is not a gift or a payment by other taxpayers when someone puts money into an RRSP. The same thing is true when we invest in the Canada pension plan fund. The fact is if some of that money is invested from outside the country, it comes back with a return. According to the rules on both Canada pension and RRSP that money is then taxable on receipt.

Why on earth would we say we do not want any American money in Canada? If we can take \$100 and have it bring back another \$100 because it has been invested there for a number of years at a good interest rate, it brings \$100 into this country from an international market that was not here before. It is now going to be taxed at regular tax rates. So it not only adds to the wealth of the country but it also produces tax revenue for the government at the time of retirement, as all RRSPs do.

The member from the NDP has some really cute statements. I like that one about Reform getting at the grassroots. He had it wrong about the sand part and the head. We do want to listen to the people. We want to do what is best for them. He is cute in that regard, but I really think he should start thinking a little more globally, a little more laterally, think a little more beyond a very narrow focus that the NDP seems to be stuck in. That has kept it at the low level of public support it has enjoyed over the last 50 years.

Mr. Tony Valeri (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I just want to make a couple of points on this motion and get some facts on the record.

Canadian pension funds and individuals saving through RRSPs can invest up to 20% of their assets abroad. It is a statement and a fact that I think most Canadians are aware of.

● (1700)

It should also be said that this 20% is a significant amount of international diversification and additional international exposure can also be gained by investing in Canadian companies with international operations. However, the 20% foreign property rule also ensures that a significant portion of tax assisted savings is invested in Canada.

We should also point out the fact that in recent days international markets have not performed well. Present rules are intended to provide a sort of balance for Canadian investors.

It is also important to mention studies by experts like Mr. Slater who stated that Canada's capital markets could absorb the increase in the CPP fund. The fact is that our capital market is quite healthy. It does provide substantial rates of return. Let us also remember that the changes to C-2 are increasing the rates of return to the Canada pension plan. So we are all moving in the same direction.

I also want to point out a statement that was made by the hon. member from the Reform Party who said that it was important to listen to the people because they are connected to the grassroots. I am sure every member of this House takes the opportunity of listening to constituents and trying to reflect their concerns here in this House of Commons.

It is also important to note that Canadians have indicated through public consultations that they want the CPP fund to be invested like other pension funds. Today in Canada pension funds are allowed to invest up to 20% of their assets in foreign securities. The CPP will follow the same limitation. It does allow for diversification to enhance returns but it also ensures that CPP funds are invested predominantly in Canada.

As was stated earlier, the intent of the government is to ensure the financial stability of this plan. It is crucial that the changes that we have been making to the CPP provide for that financial sustainability. With this particular motion we would be treating the Canada pension plan in isolation. Making changes to the Canada pension plan or if we did make changes to other tax assisted programs, it would not be fair.

What we are saying is that the CPP fund will follow the same limitations. If the foreign property rule were to change at some point in the future then we would see the Canada pension plan reflect that change. Therefore, if in the future the 20% foreign

property rule were eliminated, although no one is saying it will be eliminated and we are not advocating its elimination, then the Canada pension plan fund, as requested by Canadians through prior consultations, would be treated like other pension plans in Canada.

What C-2 does is treat the Canada pension plan like other pension plans throughout this country.

I believe it is important to make those points. Other members have made similar points. I would certainly encourage members of this House not to support Motion No. 2 for the reasons stated.

The Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Deputy Speaker: The question on Motion No. 2 is deemed to have been put, a division deemed demanded and deferred pursuant to special order made earlier this day.

The next question is on Group No. 3, Motion No. 8.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean Dubé (Madawaska—Restigouche, PC) moved:

Motion No. 8

That Bill C-2, in Clause 53, be amended by adding after line 15 on page 28 the following:

“(1.1) A regulation made under paragraph (1)(b) must reflect the objects of the Board as set out in section 5.”

He said: Mr. Speaker, this is another amendment to Bill C-2. It is still time for government members to see the light and to support amendments that will make the Canada pension plan more fair, more transparent, more performing and more accountable to those who contribute to it. I hope government members will support this amendment.

• (1705)

This is an addition to clause 53 of the bill, which deals with the regulations that the governor in council may make.

In its current form, clause 53 basically provides that the governor in council may make regulations: (a) specifying which provisions of the Pension Benefits Standards Act of 1985 apply to the board; (b) respecting the investments the board may make; (c) prescribing anything that the act provides.

Clause 53 also deals with the coming into effect of regulations. We are pleased to see that a regulation has no force or effect until it has been approved by at least two thirds of the participating provinces having in total not less than two thirds of the population.

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The purpose of our proposed amendment to clause 53 is to require the governor in council to take into account the objects of the board, as set out in clause 5 of the bill.

Allow me to read clause 5 so that hon. members can understand the scope of the obligation that we want to impose on the governor in council:

5. The objects of the Board are

(a) to manage any amounts that are transferred to it under section 111 of the *Canada Pension Plan* in the best interests of the contributors and beneficiaries under that Act; and

(b) to invest its assets with a view to achieving a maximum rate of return, without undue risk of loss, having regard to the factors that may affect the funding of the *Canada Pension Plan* and the ability of the *Canada Pension Plan* to meet its financial obligations.

[*English*]

Therefore, by passing our amendment the governor in council would be bound by this mission as it is detailed in clause 5. This would ensure that after the three year phase-in period the government exercises its ability to restrict investment under clause 53(1)(b) in a manner that reflects the best interest of the beneficiaries.

This would be done by requiring that such regulations be made with a view to ensuring that the plan's investment advisers are subject to the prudent person rule. To take effect, any regulation that is not passed with a view to those objectives would have to be approved by two-thirds of the participating provinces with two-thirds of the population.

Bill C-2 provides the government with the ability to set through regulations the kinds of investments the board may make. This may preclude the board from making investments that are in the best interests of the beneficiaries, for example, through limits on foreign investments or the government could choose to simply list certain sectors at the expense of others.

We want to ensure that this plan operates in the best interest of the beneficiaries free from any political, economic and social objectives.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre de Savoye (Portneuf, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to comment on what our colleague from the Conservative Party has just said.

First, we know that with this bill, workers and companies will have to contribute more to a fund so that when people go on retirement, they will receive an amount that may not be very high but that will nevertheless be essential.

We know also that if we do not act now, it will not be long before the Canada pension plan can no longer meet its obligations. That is why, I repeat, the Bloc Québécois supports this bill.

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• (1710)

But also, when money is taken from employers and employees, it is also taken from the economy in which they are living, and these are considerable amounts that workers or employers will not be able to recycle in the economic system through the purchase of goods and services. It is therefore essential that the money that will be taken and given to an agency responsible for reinvesting it be invested in a way that allows these communities to continue to rely on the economic activity they require to survive.

However, if I heard correctly, the motion that has just been presented would allow and would require the investment board to reinvest without taking into consideration the social aspects or the economic impacts in the community. I believe that in fact this agency should have a social conscience.

I would like to mention in this respect the case of Quebec and its Caisse de dépôt et placement which has in fact allowed the Government of Quebec to ensure greater economic returns for Quebec in keeping with the requirements of Quebec society. It seems to me that the federal government would be well advised to consider what is being done in Quebec in this area and to do the same.

That is in fact my interpretation of what it wants to do with the bill we are considering. It seems to me that any amendment that would not limit the board's ability to make investments through which Canadians can obtain a better return not only when they retire but also now when they are contributing is a step in the right direction. Any amendment that would go against that objective would be a step in the wrong direction.

I think it is also important to note that for an employer or an employee who will see next year an increase in his or her contributions to the Canada pension plan, this will have an impact in terms of competitiveness. I was pleased when the Minister of Human Resources Development announced a reduction in employment insurance contributions. I consider that this also is a step in the right direction, because it will allow in fact to maintain payroll taxes and other deductions at an acceptable level.

However, the Minister of Human Resources Development did not bother unfortunately to consider the retroactive effect of an increase in contributions for the current year, and this will definitely have an impact on the personal disposable income of each worker and on the production and operating costs of every business.

• (1715)

In economic terms, this has a significant adverse effect. And in the future, as the contribution rate slowly increases, it will be important to reassure our business community, our businesses and

their employees that adjustments to employment insurance premiums or other measures will indeed counterbalance the drain on corporate or personal finances caused by contributions to the Canada pension plan.

This is a matter of economic balance. We cannot dip into a lake indefinitely and hope it will keep filling up by itself. It will need water sooner or later. He who draws water out of a lake has to ensure that a soothing rain falls on the area, otherwise it will dry up. This is a simple principle, and the example was an obvious one, but that is reality. Businesses and employees cannot keep on paying indefinitely.

At one point, the economic balance will be destroyed and this will have repercussions on our society, as it will slow the economy down, with fewer businesses employing fewer people, who will produce fewer goods that fewer consumers will be able to buy. That is not what Bill C-2 seeks to do. However, it would be important that the government side give the business community and our workers some indication that it is aware of this and will take appropriate measures to protect the sound balance I just mentioned.

In closing, allow me to say that, in Quebec, we are 35 years ahead on this pension plan issue. We have a pension plan in Quebec. Quebec's experience was a good experience, and I only hope that our Canadian friends make the most of it.

[English]

Mr. Rick Laliberte (Churchill River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to speak against the amendment which basically targets the investments of the board on a high return on international markets and possibly domestic markets, but there is no consciousness of Canadian here.

Our responsibility is to invest our pensions for future generations. It is a social cycle where the youth provide a means for the elderly, the underprivileged and the disabled. It is a human cycle. That is our purpose.

When we have this huge fund for investment purposes we should be consciously aware of Canadian content and Canadian needs. At sometime in the future, beside the investment requirement, our targets could be set on the highest rate of return on investment and disregard the environmental needs or the economic needs of a region of Canada. Instead it could be sent offshore into an Asian region where the return could be 20%. It could be a nice, juicy return. The money could be invested in another region which promises a higher return.

Here we have a chance to invest it in an underprivileged region. It would give a certain workforce in the region more wages in their pockets to contribute to the investment fund. It is a cycle. The more we work, the more the investment fund will work.

The concept of Canadians being Canadian is what is being tested by the amendment. We have to think of the Canadian picture and the Canadian future.

• (1720)

The investment future is a means of our purchasing the economic engine of the future. We can invest it strategically. Hopefully the investment board will do that. If it is restricted to investing only in higher returns, our Canadian concept and our Canadian vision will be dimmed.

I speak against the amendment and encourage other members to reflect on the Canadian need and the Canadian perspective for the betterment of our future.

Mrs. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary—Nose Hill, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, if any Canadians watching the debate were wondering about the necessity of the amendment, they had only to listen to the Bloc Quebecois and the NDP to be scared right out of their socks.

The amendment would make it necessary for the board and for cabinet, in making regulations respecting how the board invests, to be guided simply and solely by what is in the best interest of contributors and beneficiaries.

This is our retirement we are playing with here. What words do we hear from the socialists? We have to invest “strategically”. We have to have a “social conscience”. I can just see the socialists getting into government, licking their chops over having these billions of dollars to do their wonderful social engineering experiments with. It would be our pensions they would be playing with.

If we do not have an amendment which prevents a future cabinet from indulging in that kind of nonsense, this kind of doctrinaire driven investment, our pension security goes right out the window. We would have all those with noble intentions to save the country or to save this or that industry, having our money to play with. It is bad enough that we are paying so much in taxes for social engineers to dispose of, to waste and to fritter away as they have for years and years. Now they want to use our pension plan.

I hope Canadians watching this debate run, not walk, to their faxes, phones and e-mail machines to say: “For God’s sake, members of Parliament, include this amendment and make sure that whatever you do with our pension funds you are guided simply and solely by what is in our best interest and what will get us the best return, secure future pensions, and keep the mitts of social engineers and economic central planners off our pension plans”.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to speak to

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this motion because, frankly, I was rather surprised by the remarks of the Reform Party member before me.

He accuses the other parties in the House of not responsibly studying this bill and yet, in committee, the model proposed by the Reform Party was shown systematically to not necessarily be sufficient for all Canadians and really had no future here.

Today we are considering an amendment to the bill at report stage aimed at ensuring that action the governor in council may decide to take regarding the management of the investment board be in keeping with the mandate of the board.

I think we have to acknowledge that this is an interesting amendment. I do not think the Reform Party said it either, but I find it a bit surprising, at the stage we have reached in considering the bill and the contribution made by all the parties. I think there has to be some sort of balance in the way return is made on investment in the Canada pension plan, like the Quebec pension plan. Under the bill the investment board would be mandated to ensure profitability only.

• (1725)

A limit has been set so that there will be no more than 20% of foreign investments. An earlier demonstration has explained very well why these things are being put into place.

It can also be understood on the other hand that the present draft amendment is not aimed at changing the basis of the bill, but at improving it, as the person moving it sees it. I believe this point of view can be shared, by saying that, yes, the investment board will be given a clear mandate, in other words to seek the best possible economic return. At the same time, however, we want to make sure that the proposed amendment, when the government brings in regulations on this, will be in keeping with the mandate of the investment board.

In this way there is an attempt to avoid excesses, and perhaps a sudden need by the Canadian government to exceed the mandate of the investment board. This can go both ways. It could be a decision by the government to have the capital invested in projects not directly linked with the clear mandate of the investment board, but it could go the other way as well. If we want to respect the statutory scheme, if we wish to ensure that its logic is respected as the bottom line, this amendment must be considered in order.

Would we not end up in a sort of a dead-end situation, an unacceptable impasse, if the government could adopt regulations which would run counter to the objectives of the investment board? I think that, within its general mandate of good government acting in the best interests of society, the government will always have the opportunity to take decisions which strike it being best for the future of its people, but that expanded power must not necessarily be via regulatory channels. It may be a good thing to retain this right, having it operate via measures which require legislation, in

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order to ensure that things are not done in a sort of underhanded way.

For this reason, the amendment on the table is worthy of consideration and of being judged on its worth. It must be looked at within the general objective of the statutory scheme. That objective is to ensure that the investment board can maximize its outcome and do so with a government which respects that mandate. This is the spirit in which we will support this amendment.

[English]

Mr. Tony Valeri (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Bill C-2 reflects what Canadians have said throughout the consultation process. In fact the motion would eliminate the restrictions that apply to other pension plans in Canada, essentially specific restrictions that are part of the fed-prov agreement.

The regulations which are part of Bill C-2 require applying the appropriate provisions and regulations of the Pension Benefits Standards Act to the new CPP investment board, regulations that in fact state things like the fund could not hold more than 30% of voting shares of a company or that it could not invest more than 10% in the security of a single company.

As joint stewards of the plan and as a result of the fed-prov negotiations and agreements, Bill C-2 will specify the arrangements under which provinces will have access to portions of the new CPP funds the board allocates to bonds.

Essentially the investment the fund makes requires that domestic equity be passive and that it be reviewed after three years. Provinces will have a guarantee of access to a portion of the new funds and thereafter, after three years, their access will reflect a percentage of provincial and municipal bonds held by pension funds in Canada.

That being said and despite the restrictions, the chief actuary still says the fund will receive a 3.8 per cent real rate of return, which is a good rate of return and one that reflects the priorities and the best interest of Canadians.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): It being 5.30 o'clock, the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's order paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

• (1730)

[English]

CANADIANS

Mr. Gurmant Grewal (Surrey Central, Ref.) moved:

That a legislative committee of this House be instructed to prepare and bring in a bill, in accordance with Standing Order 68(4)(b), to prevent the reference to and designation of any Canadian or group of Canadians in a hyphenated form, based on race, religion, colour or place of origin.

He said: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the people of Surrey Central and on behalf of the silent majority in Canada I am pleased to introduce my private member's Motion No. 24 calling for the introduction of legislation which would prevent the reference and designation of any Canadian or group of Canadians in a hyphenated form based on race, religion, colour or place of origin.

I have many reasons and experiences personally in my life which have compelled me to introduce Motion No. 24 concerning hyphenated Canadians, but let me first clear the air. This motion is non-partisan and is put forward with the best interests in mind for the people and the future of our beloved country of Canada.

Canada is a country of immigrants. I respect the diversity of Canada and its cultural mosaic. Our diversity is our asset, not a liability. We do not oppose the multicultural fact of Canada but taxpayer funded official multiculturalism as a Government of Canada objective, that is the commercialization of multiculturalism.

It is time to review our 25 year old expensive and divisive multicultural policy. It needs not only a tune-up but an overhaul. Let us not look 25 years backward. There is no use crying over spilt milk. Let us look beyond our noses. Let us look to the future and believe in the reality and changing dynamics of Canada. Emphasis should be on enhancing the equality of Canadians.

Most people view themselves as Canadians, yet the government has been collecting information about their ancestral origins and referring to them accordingly. The census is becoming more and more precarious. In the 1991 census Stats Canada asked the question "to which ethnic or cultural group did your ancestors belong?" It listed 15 ethnic or cultural groups as choices but not Canadian as a group.

The current ministry of multiculturalism has three goals: fostering Canadian identity and belonging, assisting with integration, and creating social justice by eliminating the barriers to equality. None of these goals can be achieved under the present federal multiculturalism policy by encouraging hyphenation of Canadians.

Hyphenation of Canadians weakens and dilutes the Canadian identity and belonging. Hyphenation inhibits integration and rather assists segregation of our population. Hyphenation of Canadians fosters barriers to equality rather than eliminating those barriers. Hyphenation does more harm than good. In fact, we see that the government is going in a completely opposite direction, 180° from the objective we want to achieve.

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Rather than uniting Canada and sustaining our multicultural reality, we are going completely in the opposite direction on this. The current policy is promoting diversity at the expense of unity and equality. As parliamentarians it is our obligation to ensure our laws and policies achieve the desired outcome.

We have many differences among all of us. Two individuals are different unless they are identical twins or perhaps if they are cloned. A person could be, for example, a woman and at the same time a mother. She could be fat, short, with a particular ethnicity, language, colour, religion, et cetera. That is okay. We respect that.

• (1735)

Like everyone else, I am equally proud of my ethnicity, my culture and my religion. Like everyone else, I have chosen Canada as my home. This is the future of my children and my family. This is where our hopes and opportunities are and I am proud of that, like everyone else. Canada has been generous to me and my family. I and my family are proud to hold a Canadian passport. Like everyone else, I am proud to be a Canadian. But the hyphen still interferes with my pride.

This government encourages new Canadians to be called something like Indo Canadians, Chinese Canadians, Italian Canadians, not just Canadians.

The other day on TV the Secretary of State for Multiculturalism and the Status of Women said she is proud to be a Trinidad Canadian. She is a Canadian government minister. When will she call herself a proud Canadian? When will she call a Canadian a Canadian? When will she have a Canada first attitude? Those are the questions many Canadians are asking. But just as in our question period in the House, they do not get answers.

It is time to define Canadian culture for the 21st century. During this century we have seen enough evidence in many African and Middle Eastern countries of the consequences of dividing populations based on ethnicity, race, religion or tribe. It is never too late. We can still learn lessons to keep us united and strong, rather than divided and segregated, particularly at a time when we are working hard to heal fractious wounds and to keep Canada united.

Hyphenation and multicultural policies promote too much diversity at the expense of unity and equality. Reminding us of our different origins is less useful in building a unified country than emphasizing the things we have in common.

We have too many differences based on race, religion, culture, ethnicity, et cetera, but we have only one common similarity, we are all Canadians.

The children in our schools have differences, but we call them students. The men and women in the army have differences, but we

call them soldiers. Citizens in our country have differences, but why should we not call ourselves Canadians? In fact, the definition of multiculturalism should be a single society united by shared laws, values, future aspirations and responsibilities.

Let individuals and groups have full freedom to promote their own culture, their own religions, heritage, et cetera. If the truth be told, current multiculturalism is actually multifacialism. Hyphenation brands us like commodities, but we are all equal human beings. It creates different tiers of Canadians.

Are there some Canadians who are more Canadian than others? Every Canadian has the right to be 100% Canadian and not a sub-Canadian.

How foolish it sounds when someone says even Canadians voted for Chinese Canadians or Indo Canadians or Italian Canadians.

This government's practices and policies unnecessarily fuel division, frictions, jealousies and prevent and discourage integration of various communities and, in fact, are a precursor to discrimination.

Canadians continue to search with increasing urgency for ways to cross lines of colour, culture and religion. Yet the more we criss-cross these lines which establish our identity, the more it becomes evident that the very lines that define us also confine us.

• (1740)

What can we do? Surrendering a hyphen is one thing. That tiny little splash of ink called a hyphen unites words but acts as a wedge to distance words and keep them apart. The best way to draw a line is simply to withdraw that line. Sooner or later we have to get rid of the stigma of hyphenated Canadianism, otherwise our children, our grandchildren and their grandchildren will continue to be identified with prefixes like Indo, Chinese, Italian, French, English and even Trinidad when they are described as Canadians. Canadians in other countries are not called Canado Indian. They are not called Canado Chinese, Canado French or Canado Italian.

How about true origins in history? Many may be Aryan before being Chinese or Indian. Should we call them Aryan Chinese Canadians? How about those with mixed ethnicity like Ukrainian Polish French Italian Canadian? What should we call them? It is possible in our country to have brothers and sisters in one family who could have been born in Trinidad, India and Canada, but they would still be a family of Canadians. It is as simple as that.

The essence of the Canadian bill of rights and the charter of rights and freedoms is to uphold every individual as equal before and under the law and free from discrimination. We should sensitize Canadians to each other and stress not the differences that divide us but the similarities that unite us.

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Hyphenation and promotion of cultural diversity by overnment encourages ethnic differences that lead immigrants to adopt a psychology of separation from mainstream culture. It isolates ethnic racial groups in distinct enclaves by fostering an inward focus mentality that drives a wedge between Canadian of different backgrounds. Let us not create multicultural tensions or invoke jealousies but foster an atmosphere of harmony and love.

Motion No. 24 has raised more than just a few eyebrows. It has generated an outpouring of support from across Canada to my office. From the feedback I have received I know I am not alone. There are many more Canadians across this great land who feel the same way. One Canadian even sent me a five dollar bill to have a drink in his name.

My office has received many telephone calls, letters and e-mail messages. People have even stopped me on the street to tell me of their support of my efforts to draw attention to those problems caused by the use of hyphenation.

I have so many quotes to share but time does not permit me. I wanted to quote from about 60 letters.

We must all work together to pursue equality and unity but it is vital that government lead the way. It will certainly bridge the gap. It will be a step forward toward the elimination of racial barriers. Let us not be partisan on this significant issue. Let us embrace what is common among all of us. Let us promote, encourage and put Canada first. Let us put our effort into keeping Canada not only united but together and strong. Let us not create multicultural tensions or invoke jealousy but foster an atmosphere of harmony and love. Let us all be 100% Canadians and not sub-Canadians. Let us start thinking about and defining Canadian culture.

• (1745)

In all honesty, I hoped to bridge the political divide and gain the consensus from all sides of this House to address what I and many other Canadians believe to be a problem, including many members from various parties whom I talked to and including the lonely independent member of this House.

Let us work together, recognize the merit of motion 24. This is what the silent Canadian majority want. Motion 24, if implemented by the government, will certainly bridge the gap. It will be a step forward toward eliminating racial barriers. It is everyone's responsibility to find solutions, but it is important that the government lead the way.

Let us do what is in the best interests of all Canadians and Canada. I urge all the hon. members, including you Mr. Speaker, not to look to your political stripes but to look into your own heart and stand up united in support of motion 24.

Hon. Hedy Fry (Secretary of State (Multiculturalism)(Status of Women), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, may I say from the outset that although I consider this motion misguided, I am absolutely sure that its impetus was my colleague's sincere love for Canada and his desire to ensure that Canada remains whole and united.

Having said that I want you to know, Mr. Speaker, that my basic objection to this motion, since there is no official policy about calling oneself a hyphenated Canadian, is there is no law that designates that one must do that. The wording of this motion seeks to prevent freedom of speech. It seeks to prevent the freedom of a person to define themselves in any way that they choose.

[Translation]

I share my colleague's opinion regarding respect, but I urge him to take a closer look at Canada. Our country is not one-dimensional. Our collective identity is complex, as are the individuals that make it up.

Our geography is one of the most diverse there is, our history is a mosaic of events that shaped our country, and our population is made up of representatives of every culture in the world. These factors enrich our identity.

[English]

Do we deny the diversity of our landscape? Do we deny the many events that mark our progress in national maturity? Should we deny the reality of our geography, of our regions? Should we deny the reality of cultural diversity? Of course not. Even my colleague agrees with me on this. He freely admits that he is not opposed to multiculturalism. This certainly indicates good sense because we are a multicultural country whether we like it or not.

It makes it all the more difficult to understand the motion we are debating today. I can only believe that my colleague does not fully understand Canada's multicultural policy or what changes it has wrought in Canadian society.

For example, had it not been for Canada's multicultural policy and its supporting program, federal government initiatives, it is questionable whether my colleague would be sitting in the House today as a member of Parliament exercising his right to debate the issue of multiculturalism. This House reflects to an unprecedented degree the cultural diversity that is and has been for a long, long time a primary characteristic of our society.

Here is the figure. Forty-one MPs in this House are first generation Canadians. This is what the multiculturalism policy is about, about equality, about justice, about representation and about the right to define ourselves in any way we choose. It is not about hyphenation.

Earlier I referred to this motion as misguided. That is at its best. At its worst it is an affront to everything Canada stands for in the area of human rights. I remind you, Mr. Speaker, next year Canada

will be commemorating the 50th Anniversary of the United Nations' Declaration of Human Rights which was drafted by a Canadian.

[*Translation*]

My colleague wanted to speak on behalf of all Canadians, as though we all shared his opinion about our individual identity.

With all due respect, I do not think this is the case. Canadians in all communities are proud of their heritage and take advantage of the freedom available to them to express this pride. In my opinion, this is proof that Canada is a country that respects individual rights and freedom of expression. One does not have to deny one's background to be welcome in Canada.

• (1750)

[*English*]

I consider myself completely Canadian, but I do not hesitate to admit that my origins are in Trinidad. As a Canadian, I can take advantage of the freedoms that are allowed me to express my opinions and to present myself as the person that I am. It is my right to say who I am. I can say I am a woman, a doctor, a Catholic or a member of Parliament.

I also have the right, if I wish, to say that I was born in Trinidad because I am a complex being. I am made up of many different things that make me who I am. At any time in my own life and in my life cycle I may need to refer to the different aspects of my person, my character and the things that have made me to this day who I am.

Canada's multiculturalism policy, born out of our sense of justice and fair play, encourages Canadians to acknowledge, understand, accept and respect the reality of our cultural diversity knowing that it will not be a means of discrimination. It will not prevent them from participating fully in every single aspect of Canadian economic, social, political and cultural life.

It is in fact the ability of Canadians to refer to themselves according to the colour of their skin, their sexual orientation and their gender in whatever way they choose to feel secure that who they are in fact is respected or are respected by the people of this country. We do not have to become one mass of people, one amorphous mass, one cloned group where we all have to be exactly like everyone else to be accepted.

It does just the opposite. This policy is there to assist all Canadians to become full participants in Canadian society with the dignity and self-confidence that comes from personal pride. I say that an element of personal pride for many people is their family heritage.

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Ask any Canadian of Scottish background how he or she feels on hearing a pipe band strike up—or should I have said Scottish Canadian before it is too late if my hon. colleague has his way.

The multiculturalism policy is about identity, self-knowledge, personal pride and self-respect. These are qualities that are important not only to every Canadian but to every individual human being. Canadians who are confident about themselves and what they can do and offer to Canada are infinitely more valuable to our society than Canadians who must wipe the slate of their personal history completely clean in order to appeal to some artificial ideal of what it is to be a Canadian.

The perfect Canadian is one who I can say, I or my father or my grandmother chose to come to this country and make it my home. I am proud of that. I know who I am, I know what I can do and I am willing to contribute my share to keeping Canada the great country that it is without giving myself away and without having to give up who I am.

This is what multiculturalism policy is all about. It ensures that Canadians can live their lives in respect without fear that anything that they are, their colour, their gender, their sexual orientation or their religion, will remove them from participating.

My colleague's motion is obviously misguided. However, it is also the thin end of the wedge. I have to ask myself, once I and every other Canadian are forbidden to refer to ourselves according to our roots or our origins, what is the next step? Do I tear up my birth certificate which shows that I was born in Trinidad? Will I have to find some way to change the colour of my skin because it is certainly going to define me regardless of what I call myself?

A long time ago, Sir John A. Macdonald tried to form a country that was distinct from our people to the south, the United States. We have striven to have a country that is a melting pot and not an assimilated mass of people who are all seeking to be cloned and to be alike.

Should neither of these views carry any weight, the House might want to consider a third view: that this motion is a bad joke and in bad taste. On those grounds alone it should be dismissed forthwith.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Michel Bellehumeur (Berthier—Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I listened as carefully to the Reform Party member who introduced the motion as I did to the government party member.

• (1755)

To a certain extent, if sovereignists had resorted to the same discourse, I am absolutely certain that it would have been interpreted as racist, but when it comes from the two federalist parties,

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who are very often on the same wavelength and who join forces in running down Quebec, everything is just fine.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): Order. The member for Bourassa on a point of order.

Mr. Denis Coderre: Mr. Speaker, I am quite prepared to listen to the member for Berthier—Montcalm, but members of the House have never run down Quebec. We may have run down the Bloc Quebecois, but we never ran down Quebec.

[English]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): That is not a point of order.

[Translation]

Mr. Michel Bellehumeur: Mr. Speaker, the member for Bourassa should know that this was not a point of order and that the only example of what I mentioned earlier is the Reform opposition day when they and the Liberals voted hand-in-hand to blame the government of Quebec, among others, for not having held consultations on the drivel called the Calgary declaration. If the member for Bourassa did not understand that yesterday, I am telling it to him now—he is in front of me—and I hope that now he will understand.

That having been said, I read the motion carefully and I must tell you—and here I agree with the parliamentary secretary when she says that this motion is in bad taste and ill-considered—that no matter how hard I try to read it from left to right and from right to left, I have difficulty understanding it. I would like to read it for those who are listening:

That a legislative committee of this House be instructed to prepare and bring in a bill in accordance with Standing Order 68(4b), to prevent the reference to and designation of any Canadian or group of Canadians in a hyphenated form, based on race, religion, colour or place of origin.

I read it several times, and I wonder what exactly he wants us to bring in a bill on? Will it be in the regulations made by this House or in the regulations made by a department? Will it be in the legislation, in the bills, in the acts? Is its purpose to make a law on private conversations between individuals and to prevent people from mentioning Canadians of Irish, Portuguese or Haitian origin, or even Quebecers? Is its purpose to make laws on that? I do not know. Is it to forbid members in this House to use this language during debates. I do not know, the motion does not mention that.

There is one thing certain however. I agree with the parliamentary secretary. Earlier, I started by making a joke, but I agree with what has just been said on the government side. I would like to add that there is in Quebec a Charter on Rights and Freedoms. In Canada, there is the Canadian Charter on Rights and Freedoms, the Constitution Act, 1982. Quebec has never ratified it. No premier

has signed it, as the member for Bourassa would mention, I am sure. But there is section 15.(1) which states:

Every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to the equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination and, in particular, without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability.

The Quebec Charter of Rights and Freedoms has an equivalent of this section. I believe that as far as protecting individuals is concerned, in Canada and in Quebec, we have the appropriate tools. I believe that we are even ahead of many countries when it comes to individual rights. I sincerely believe that this is a debate that we should not be having.

• (1800)

I think this is a pointless debate under the circumstances, given that there are already provisions that deal very efficiently with this issue. You will have gathered from what I said that I am opposed to this motion.

I will conclude with two comments. First, with his motion, the hon. member of the Reform Party managed to suggest that the concept of Canadian culture should be redefined. I think that he does not understand his motion all that well either, because that was not exactly his intention.

Second, on the government side, in interpreting the motion, they managed to say that they were in favour of a strong and united Canada. Again, both sides are showing great imagination. But they are not really addressing Motion M-24 before us.

For all these reasons, you will understand that I cannot be in favour of Motion M-24.

[English]

Mr. Gordon Earle (Halifax West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is with mixed feelings of pleasure and great concern that I rise today in this House to speak about the motion presented by the member from the Reform Party.

I am pleased to have an opportunity to share my views on such an important issue. But at the same time, this motion proposing the creation of a House committee to draft a bill that would prevent any reference to the ethnic, cultural or religious origins of Canadians troubles me deeply.

Let us not be fooled by the wording of this motion. The Reform Party is out to destroy the multicultural policy that stands at the heart of our heritage and this comes as no surprise from a party that is promoting division and exclusion in its policies.

The member from the Reform Party presents his motion as an anti-discrimination measure that will ensure that all Canadians are considered equal in status. He refers to the use of hyphenated identification of Canadians from various origins as a way to create

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categories of citizens who are not just Canadians or simply Canadian. He argues that no one should be treated differently.

If the member thinks that being different means being less important, it is really sad. Does it mean that we should all forget our diverse origins and become white Anglo-Saxon Protestant Canadians? Does it mean that the only identity acceptable is the one of the majority? Does being Chinese-Canadian, German-Canadian or Italian-Canadian mean being less Canadian? No. It means being ourselves and wanting to be accepted as such.

The very principle of equality so often abused in Reform ideology is itself based on the idea that differences do exist. Being equal does not mean to be all the same. Equality means respecting differences and ensuring these differences will not limit the freedom of opportunity of individuals. This is what multiculturalism is all about.

Multiculturalism is about recognition, acceptance and celebration of differences. I am proud to say that this is the conception of equality promoted by the NDP. Equality means equality of opportunities. It means respecting and appreciating one's particular heritage, differences and characteristics. It also means that the government has an active role in promoting the right to be different and to counter intolerance.

To the contrary, the Reform Party wants multiculturalism to be purged from any government programs. The Reform Party thinks that the government should not participate in promoting multiculturalism because one's heritage is a private and personal matter.

Basically they say it is okay to be Indo-Canadian at home but let us avoid being multicultural in public. Why? Is it a shame to be different? Does it mean that we should all hide our roots in order to live together? Dangerous concepts and for many reasons.

It means that difference is not welcome and must be hidden. It also means that the government should not be active in promoting real equality of opportunities for minorities.

Does the member think the government has no business promoting justice or fighting racism and intolerance? Because multicultural policies are also about educating people on how enriching and powerful working together can be. Why is the Reform Party so terrified of multiple identities?

It is normal for people to cherish their specific heritages. Removing descriptions does not mean removing differences. The names we use to identify ourselves are ways of saying "Here I am. This is the way I am and I want to be respected as such".

Being Cree, Quebecois, Indo-Canadian or Jewish is a way to express our specific heritage, our roots and a certain sense of collective belonging to a group but it is not a rejection of our

common Canadian identity. In fact it is just the reverse. It is a strong statement strengthening the vibrant fabric of Canada.

• (1805)

Reform's rejection of the very idea that people have specific identities beyond their Canadian citizenship is also simplistic nonsense on the eve of the 21st century. When in the same day one can chat on the phone with someone from Rio de Janeiro, send an e-mail to a friend in Berlin, eat Jamaican patties while watching the news from Algeria or Afghanistan with a friend born in East Timor, multicultural we certainly are. To be multicultural we must fully participate in and understand this constantly changing and thriving world.

Canada has been recognized as a world leader in developing a policy that addresses today's multicultural world. Let us not give away what we have accomplished. Going back to what now seemed like stone age denials of different policies would be a major setback for this country. Sadly, this Liberal government has done little to defend multiculturalism from the unfounded and misleading attack from such groups as the Reform Party. Rather, multiculturalism programs have been whittled down bit by bit since the Liberals took office.

If the Liberals really believe in promoting diversity and participation of all Canadians in public life as a way to consolidate our national unity, maybe they could explain why this government has been following the politics of division and exclusion promoted by the Reform Party. Slashing social programs, cutting public education about multiculturalism and imposing burdens on newcomers like the infamous head tax, officially referred to as the right of landing fee, on permanent residency is not about inclusion. That is about exclusion and marginalization of a growing number of Canadians of all origins.

I and my New Democratic colleagues strongly believe that the state has an essential role in promoting a fair and just society. We think, as do the majority of Canadians, that multiculturalism policies are an important aspect of this role. In times of economic harshness, intolerance is on the rise. This should be a concern for all of us.

I personally think and history tends to confirm that in general when people can be open about and proud of their specific culture and ethnic origin, and when the state is willing to accommodate and promote diversity, there is harmony. It is only when attempts are made to suppress differences that troubles are developing.

[Translation]

I think it is possible, and even desirable, to live together in a spirit of co-operation and openness to one another. Only by recognizing our differences, not only our common values, but also our distinct historical roots, can we build a Canada that respects our characteristic diversity.

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Canada is by definition a country based on diversity: geographic diversity of course, but also the diversity of its people, cultures, languages and faiths. I think that, by emphasizing the role of the founding cultures—aboriginal, French and English—while at the same time promoting and cherishing the new multicultural reality of our country, we will learn to live together.

[English]

To recognize our differences, promote our common values and learn from each other and to enrich our cultural and social heritage is the way to a better future for Canada, not the politics of division and denial that we hear more and more from the other parties in this House. I will always rise to promote and defend our shared values of tolerance and inclusiveness that have made Canada such a cherished place to live.

I want to thank all the members for listening to my comments. I hope that I was able to convince some of them that this motion must be rejected.

Mr. Andrew Telegdi (Kitchener—Waterloo, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak on the motion. I am a little bit concerned that the member for Surrey Central does not truly appreciate the implication of the motion he has put before this House.

We get into the very idea of what it means to be a Canadian. It was not too long ago that we had a debate in this House. The issue was about people who had turbans were barred from legions, something that we as a government did not agree with. There was also the issue of people being able to wear turbans in the RCMP.

• (1810)

It is very important in some ways to recognize the reality of this country which defines us as Canadians. The strong pillars of that are tolerance, understanding, and being able to participate fully with one's different religious background, with one's different ethnic origin, with one's different place of birth and be truly Canadian.

I was not born in Canada. I came to Canada in 1957 when I was 10 years old. Since 1957 I have lived in Canada. First and foremost I am a Canadian. But there is no denying that I was born in Hungary and I would not want to deny that. My mother came here at the same time when she was 36 years old. She died very recently. She was 76 years old. She died as a Canadian. She was proud of being a Canadian, but she did not forget her homeland. She did not forget where she came from.

In many cases it is coming from other countries, coming from other cultures that we can bring the very best to this country that is called Canada, a country that is the best country in the world.

I say to the member for Surrey Central there are countries where people try to hide their background. They try to hide their ethnic heritage. They deny it. They do so because they are living in a

totalitarian country. They are living in a fascist country. In those places great sanctions are taken against people who are not perceived to be the same.

One of the strong points of this country is we can be different. If we look at the demographics of Canada, what does it mean to be a Canadian? We know the native people, our First Nations came to this country first. We know that the French factor came to this country. We know that the English factor came to this country. But we also know that we have had people come to this country from all over this planet. They have brought to this country the strengths from around the world and together have built the very best country in the world.

The other day we were debating the issue of land mines. There was an incredible consensus in this House that this was the right way to go. When I took part in the debate I could not help but remember that in 1956-57 Lester B. Pearson invented peacekeeping.

One of the reasons this has happened is because in Canada we have the demographics. It does not matter where the problem is, where the conflict is, there are Canadians with the background. They have relatives, friends, acquaintances and a familiarity with the place where the strife is taking place and they are hurting.

That is one of the reasons we as Canadians are so good at peacekeeping. We can broker differences. We can recognize differences and try to build the best society that we can. To deny that reality is to say to the rest of the world that we have to hide our differences, we have to submerge our differences. Clearly that is not what Canada is about.

I have been disturbed over the years when people have tried to attack the whole concept of multiculturalism in Canada. The reality is that we are a multicultural country. That is one of our very real strengths.

• (1815)

It is a pleasure to attend multicultural festivals with many people in my community, such as Canada Day, because we are celebrating the inclusiveness of society and sharing the best experiences from around the world.

I cannot agree with the motion. It is misguided at best. I certainly hope that we as a government and as members of the House of Commons work together to build on our tolerance and understanding so that we can continue to be a beacon of hope to a troubled world often torn by strife based on religious differences, ethnic background and various nationalities.

Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to address the motion. I thank my colleague for raising the issue. I did not think I would have the opportunity to speak today, but I am doing so because this is a subject that is dear to my heart.

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Before coming to parliament I was a teacher. That experience taught me a lot about society and about people. For almost 25 years I observed the things that happened in my classroom. I began to realize the classroom was a microcosm of society, a small society within a larger society.

As teachers we were given direction from those above us who thought they knew better than teachers how to handle the affairs of the classroom. From time to time we received directives telling us to make children more sensitive to students with certain characteristics.

When we tried to implement policies in the classroom to cause students to be more sensitive to other students with certain characteristics defined as ones we should be sensitive to, the result was very interesting. It created a problem for me in the classroom. I relate this story to the House because I think the same problem is being created within society.

Students began to resent each other when certain ones became specially identified. I began to have tensions within my small classroom because of the policy. I suggest the same thing is happening in Canada. Students became jealous of each other because some were singled out as having a special sensitivity.

One student asked me "Are we not all special? Don't each one of us as individuals have certain characteristics that others should be sensitive to?" I am sure you have certain characteristics, Mr. Speaker, that, if we were to become aware of them, we would all like to be sensitive to. We would treat you very carefully.

The students taught me something about people. Each person as individuals want to be respected because they are who they are. They do not want somebody from above telling them to be sensitive to people who have a certain characteristic.

When are children in classrooms the happiest? It is when we are sensitive to each and every one of them and do not divide them into groups or cause certain ones to be singled out as needing special attention.

We are important because we are individuals. We will run into trouble, and we already have, within the society when we begin to implement policies from above that cause resentments and jealousies.

If we single out certain characteristics, we have to ask about all other characteristics that define us. We have a very wide variety of characteristics, not just our ethnic background, religion or whatever defines us or that we feel is important. We have all these things. I do not think we should use those characteristics to set ourselves apart from others in society. There are many other characteristics we could use.

• (1820)

I want to give an example. Saskatchewan has problems that are compounding as time goes on because aboriginals have been given

the right not to comply with certain laws. Those with some aboriginal blood are now claiming the same right not to obey these laws. As a result people are beginning to be concerned about their safety and the preservation of the environment.

When we create differences we run into problems, as we already have. We should not be creating particular differences and giving people special consideration in certain areas.

I lived overseas in third world countries for almost five years. In my experience I was happiest, as the children in my classroom were happiest, when I was accepted for who I was and not because I was white, bald, of a certain religious persuasion or any other external characteristic.

We are important because we are people. Each one of us has many wonderful qualities. We are each special. Government should not be trying to define or meddle in areas that can actually divide us. That is counterproductive. It could create the problem we are actually trying to solve.

We could apply the lessons I learned in the classroom to the situation of today. We need to move toward equality. Multiculturalism is fine but government should not be involved in such things. When it is involved the big policies it tries to impose on the country do not work. One size does not fit all.

We should respect each other's background. We have many wonderful things to contribute. Let us as individuals contribute and not allow the government to become involved, as it will only make more of a mess than the one we have. We need to move toward equality. That will do more to solve the problems.

[Translation]

Mr. Denis Coderre (Bourassa, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have been in politics for 15 years to fight against people like Bloc Quebecois and Reform Party members. Why? Because they always talk about ethnic groups.

Jacques Parizeau said that the referendum was lost because of the Jewish, Italian and Greek votes. Then, during the election campaign, the Reform Party was saying "Canadians should not elect another Prime Minister from Quebec". Now, these people want to tell me what to do. They want to tell me what a Canadian is. I feel insulted and outraged by these extremists.

There is no doubt that multiculturalism is an asset. What is multiculturalism? It means being different but equal. In my riding of Bourassa, 20% of the population is Italian and 5% is Haitian. Many Haitians have settled in my riding of Bourassa.

It is a real asset to share with these people. The fact that I can speak Italian is something positive. *Mi fa molto piacere do parlo italiano, signor.*

This is what being Canadian is all about. Being Canadian means to benefit from all these cultures.

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To me, being a Canadian is to allow people to grow while respecting their roots and traditions. All these cultures make me a better Canadian. This is what makes up the people of Canada.

When I see people constantly trying to define what a Canadian should be, using the highest possible common definition, saying that we are good or bad Quebecers, I realize why the public is cynical toward politicians. Thank goodness the Liberal Party is in office with a majority. I would be concerned if we were stuck with the ethnic policies of the Reform Party or the Bloc Québécois.

If, instead of having a national vision like that of the Liberal Party of Canada, we constantly talk about regionalization, as do Reformers and Bloc members, no wonder there are problems.

• (1825)

I wish to commend our Secretary of State for Multiculturalism on her work. I wish to commend her, and I wish to commend all of the members of the Liberal Party of Canada, regardless of place of origin, as well as all of the members of the Reform Party, regardless of place of origin. They all have the opportunity to be in Canada because of equality in difference. Now, today, they want to scrap all of that. I cannot understand the logic of some members of the Reform Party. They should join the Liberal Party, because that is where openmindedness is found.

One thing that is certain, I hope this motion will be defeated. It ought not to have even been moved, because it insults people's intelligence. It is an insult to my Canadianism. I trust, however, that these motions can be taken advantage of as an opportunity for the Bloc Québécois to ask pardon of those Canadians who are of Jewish, Italian or Greek background, so that it will be possible—

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Calgary Centre on a point of order.

[*English*]

Mr. Eric Lowther (Calgary Centre, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I understand it is customary that the person who moves the motion normally has the opportunity to sum up. I request that the person who moved the motion would be next up when the member speaking concludes, which I hope will be fairly soon, looking at the clock.

The Deputy Speaker: The ruling given by the Chair on the first day of Private Members' Business in respect of the rule about the five minutes for the member who moved the motion indicated that if members kept rising in debate the member who moved would not get that opportunity.

I urge hon. members to check the ruling of the Chair on the first day of Private Members' Business. The ruling was given that day. The five minutes is available if no one else rises to speak.

The hon. member for Bourassa rose to speak. He has 10 minutes in his speech. If he uses his full time I am afraid there will not be five minutes left. If he chooses to sit down and no other member rises in debate, I will certainly recognize the hon. member for Surrey Central at the appropriate time. The hon. member for Bourassa may bear that in mind as he wishes.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Denis Coderre: Mr. Speaker, I am so open-minded that I am going to conclude my remarks quickly to enable another member to speak.

One thing is for sure, however, contrary to what the member for Laurentides has just said to me, I will never shut my trap, I will never stop talking in defence of Canada and the interests and values of Canadians.

If there is to be open-mindedness and appropriate policies, we have to have a Liberal government. I thank the good Lord that we finally, once again, have people like the Secretary of State for Multiculturalism because thanks to her and people who have chosen Canada, we can combat people like those opposite. They have greater merit than I. They chose Canada. They know about Canadian values. They know about Canada's passion and intrinsic value.

I hope that the people of the Bloc Québécois and the Reform Party will be open-minded and will apologize for wanting to have such a motion passed. This is an insult to a person's intelligence, and it is certainly not what Canada represents.

[*English*]

Ms. Marlene Jennings (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the motion the member of the Reform Party tabled in the House perturbs me quite a bit.

As I stated earlier in the House, I am a Canadian. I am a Canadian who is black, of African origin. I am of French Canadian origin. I am of Belgium origin. I am of aboriginal origin. I am of Metis origin. I have many different ethnic origins coursing in my blood. I am very proud to be a Canadian.

When I hear someone proposing that Canada become a homogenized, white bread Canada, I am scandalized. Canada has never been white bread; Canada has always been whole wheat.

An hon. member: Multi-grained whole wheat bread.

Ms. Marlene Jennings: Multi-grained whole wheat. My colleague recalled to me multi-grained whole wheat bread. It is very good for us and full of fibre.

• (1830)

As the doctor will tell us and our mother will tell us, we need fibre in our diet every day. As Canadians we have that fibre.

It is really interesting to talk about how he wants to abolish the appellations, Italian Canadian, Greek Canadian, Jewish Canadian, Ukrainian Canadian. The point is we are all Canadian. As the hon. Secretary of State for Multiculturalism mentioned and stated quite clearly, people and individuals do not define themselves by one thing—

The Deputy Speaker: I regret to interrupt the hon. member.

[Translation]

The time provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired and the item is dropped from the Order Paper.

[English]

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Surrey Central on a point of order.

Mr. Gurmant Grewal (Surrey Central, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, since the employment of dirty tactics in the debate, I was not given time to close my debate and give answers to some of the questions raised in the debate.

I will ask you, Mr. Speaker, to seek unanimous consent on the motion and I implore the House to call for a recorded vote on motion 24.

The Deputy Speaker: The House has heard the proposal of the hon. member. Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: No.

The Deputy Speaker: There is no consent.

The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been moved pursuant to order made Tuesday, November 25, 1997.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

CLIMATE CHANGE

Hon. Christine Stewart (Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased that this evening parliamentarians of all parties have the opportunity to record their opinions in this House on the important subject of climate change.

Climate change, the most serious environmental issue this century, has been much talked about by members during the last few months here in the House of Commons during question period, in the standing committee on environment, in the press and no doubt in homes and communities across this country.

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We know that this issue, climate change, is of great concern to Canadians. According to our most recent polling, 87% of Canadians believe it is likely, or somewhat likely, that climate change will have serious negative effects on both the environment and our economy within 10 years.

Seventy-two per cent of Canadians believe that the government should take necessary actions to curb greenhouse gas emissions, even if such actions could have negative impact on the economy and their lifestyles. Seventy per cent of Canadians believe that individuals can play a part in doing something about climate change.

The phenomenon of climate change is the most serious environmental threat of this century. In a statement released by the international panel on climate change in 1995, over 2,000 internationally renowned scientists from all across the world told us that human activity is having a discernible impact on the global climate. Nevertheless, some skeptics still refute the science suggesting an enormous hoax has been perpetrated upon the global community and that we can carry on with business as usual or at least wait 20 to 40 years before taking preventative action.

As responsible members of Parliament, as responsible government with the authority to act, we are compelled to respond to this environmental threat with at minimum the attitude of precaution. As a government we must show leadership by working with all Canadians, all governments, provincial, territorial and municipal, all industry and business leaders and our scientists in order to put in place both realistic and achievable targets for greenhouse gas emissions reductions and implementation plans which reflect the engagement of all.

It is important to note that if we take up this challenge, as we must, we will not only correct a serious global environmental problem in the long term, but we will also experience some shorter term environmental and health benefits along the way. The measures we promote to tackle the climate change problem will also help to address smog, acid rain and lake water deterioration. Smog accounts for an estimated 1,500 premature deaths in Ontario alone, to say nothing of the cost of hospitalization, asthma attacks and chronic bronchitis. Committing ourselves to reduce greenhouse gases will contribute to cleaner air and purer water.

• (1835)

It is important to reflect upon why this issue is important to Canada. A series of studies released this fall outline the impacts of climate change on the different regions of Canada, B.C. and the Yukon, the prairies, the Arctic, Ontario, Quebec and Atlantic Canada.

The Mackenzie Basin impact study of the north reveals that the north has already warmed at three times the global rate. We now know that climate change will result in melting glaciers, ice caps

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and permafrost which will result in higher sea levels, more frequent forest fires and changes in migration patterns of wildlife.

The Mackenzie Basin impact study goes on to outline how in contrast to sea levels, lake and river water levels will actually drop. This will affect freshwater sources and fish and wildlife habitat. There will also be an impact on agriculture, forestry and fishery industries because of more frequent droughts and fires.

However, despite these serious threats, there are those who suggest that in a cold northern climate like Canada, climate change will be a benefit, this despite the fact that climate change would cause unprecedented upheavals in our environment, in our economy and in our lives. Key sectors of our economy such as forestry, fisheries and agriculture will be affected in all areas of Canada. Canada will not be a winner if the phenomenon of climate change continues unchecked, and this must be understood.

Scientists predict that with present levels of greenhouse gases we will see more severe weather events like the B.C. snowstorm last December, hailstorms that hit Alberta in 1991, floods such as those that struck the Saguenay and Manitoba in the last two years and possibly more tornadoes and severe storms across the country.

According to the insurance industry, there have been record losses in recent years, much higher than previously recorded. In 1996 alone extreme weather events resulted in losses of approximately \$165 million. This is the reality we face in Canada, a country which on a per capita basis consumes enormous amounts of energy, the second highest per capita rate worldwide, second only to our neighbour the United States. This means we contribute significantly on a per capita basis to the problem of climate change.

It is also important to put this reality within the global context. Our world population continues to grow at an unprecedented rate and all human beings are consumers of energy and contributors to greenhouse gas emissions. Most of the population growth occurs in developing nations. Most of these people live in poverty with no or little access to electricity. Poor people use every tree available for cooking and heating.

Developing nations are among the largest smog ridden countries in the world. The air is rank with wood, coal and charcoal smoke in combination with dirty fuel emissions from cars, trucks and buses. It is a real chemical soup with serious health and business costs, to say nothing of the environmental implications.

We must ask ourselves if it is fair to tell developing nations that they cannot grow and develop because this would perforce increase their countries' emissions. No. Despite the reality of dirty air in many cities of the developing world and incredibly high populations, it is still the developed world that accounts for 58% of global carbon dioxide emissions.

Is it possible to allow developing nations to grow with business as usual unchecked growth in greenhouse gas emissions? No, but it is possible for them to grow with an equivalent effort at reduction of greenhouse gases in relation to developed nations.

• (1840)

This proposal offers many opportunities for a country like Canada, opportunities to share our technologies, our science, our expertise, opportunities to invest in developing world growth in a green and environmentally friendly fashion.

Canada has some of the world's best environmental technologies, some of which must be used more in Canada but which are very attractive to developing nations as well. For example, we have some of the best technologies to assist in the clean burning of coal.

Since 1975, the government has spent \$10 million annually on coal research and development, 40% of which has gone to clean coal research and development. Environment Canada has participated in this program and the program is expected to continue for the next three to five years.

As I have said earlier, the science is sound and compelling and that is why, when the Canadian government goes to Kyoto next week, it goes in search of realistic, meaningful, achievable and equitable targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

We want to make it clear that all countries in the world must participate in reducing emissions globally. The agreement will also underscore the need for flexibility mechanisms which will allow all nations to make significant domestic reductions and earn credit for reductions achieved internationally.

We are doing this because it is right for the world and because it is right for Canada.

[*Translation*]

But Kyoto is not an end in itself. I do not wish to downplay the importance of the Kyoto meeting. It will be a real challenge to reach an agreement acceptable to everyone, to developing countries more concerned with feeding their growing populations, as well as to small, insular countries that run the danger of sinking under rising ocean levels.

The real work will begin, however, when we come back from Kyoto, for it is then that we will have to decide how we are going to achieve the targets on which we have agreed.

When my colleague, the Minister of Natural Resources, Ralph Goodale, and I met with our provincial and territorial counterparts in Regina two weeks ago, we agreed to formulate this plan together. The federal government alone cannot reduce greenhouse gas emissions in Canada.

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It was after consultation with provincial, territorial and municipal governments and with industry and environmental groups that we formulated Canada's proposal for the Kyoto meeting. We will take the same approach in working out the plan for meeting our commitments.

We want the plan we come up with to be consistent with the environmental, economic and social aspirations of Canadians.

No, it will not be easy. Everyone will have to take part: governments, industry, environmental groups, communities and each member of the Canadian public.

[*English*]

We are all going to have to make changes, changes in the way we generate electricity, changes in the way we get around, changes in how we heat our homes and changes in the way our industries use energy. These changes will be significant, but I have faith in the willingness of Canadians to make the necessary changes.

Who would have thought a decade or more ago that Canadians would spend the time required to separate their garbage, rinse tins and jars and carry different loads of garbage out on garbage day?

Today, curbside recycling is so much a part of our lives, not many of us think about it any more. We just do it. Many, without access to the program, are actually taking their recyclable garbage to another area of town that has the program so that they can contribute to the recycling effort.

• (1845)

Taking action to reduce emissions can be as simple and inexpensive as changing or cleaning filters in your furnace and having it serviced once a year, driving more slowly and keeping your vehicle's tires fully inflated.

Canadians across the country are already doing what they can to reduce emissions. They are helping to reduce the number of cars on the road.

The people at the Toronto Region Carpool initiative have worked with large employers in three areas of Toronto not well served by public transit to organize car pools for employees.

Another example is in Edmonton. The EcoCity Society is building greenways from abandoned rail corridors for cycling, walking and in-line skating creating a green link between inner city communities and downtown.

Again, the Cambie Corridor Consortium in Vancouver provides ride matching services and oversees preferred parking for vans and car pools, transit pass discounts, and showers for those who walk and cycle to work.

In Whitehorse, Yukon a 10 kilometre trail will provide residents with a safe and direct route for cycling and walking in the summer, snowshoeing and skiing in the winter.

They are making it easy for drivers to have their emissions tested.

Citizens in Fredericton and Saint John, New Brunswick competed in the Emissions Impossible contest to see which community could have the greatest number of cars tested for emissions. One participant even had the problem fixed and brought his car back the same day to pass the test.

In Edmonton a campaign called SMOG FREE, Save Money On Gas From Reduced Exhaust Emissions, provided drivers with free emissions tests and a coupon good for \$10 off on any emissions reducing work of more than \$50.

Canadians are helping homeowners make their homes more energy efficient, saving them money and reducing emissions at the same time. Green home visits in Cornwall, Ontario have saved homeowners anywhere from \$300 to \$10,000 on their heating bills. In St. Catharines, Ontario home visits have helped to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 369,000 kilograms per year.

The 20 Per Cent Club is a group of more than 30 Canadian municipalities who have committed themselves to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 20% by 2005. One of the members of the club, Toronto, has just been recognized by the United Nations as the most successful city in the world at reducing emissions.

Business too is participating in the effort to reduce emissions because it is good for the environment and because it is good for the bottom line. Between 1990 and 1994 Chrysler Canada decreased total energy use by 5% at its largest Canadian operation at the same time as production increased by almost 50%. Over the same period Falconbridge reduced its overall energy consumption by just over 6% by modifying compressed air systems in several parts of its operations.

Just this week Petro-Canada announced a joint venture with Iogen to develop Canadian technology to produce ethanol, an alternative fuel, from straw, waste wood and other byproducts of agriculture and forestry. Producing ethanol from biomass in this way reduces carbon dioxide emissions by more than 90% compared with the production and use of gasoline. Petro-Canada is committed to exploring the commercial potential of this process because it believes that harnessing our powers of innovation is the way to reduce emissions.

Government too is committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Besides several other significant budget measures taken by the federal government in the last few years, I was very proud earlier this week to announce that my department will be purchasing 100% green power for its Alberta facilities from Calgary's ENMAX. This is the first ever institutional green power purchase in Canada. By choosing to power our facilities from wind power supplied by Vision Quest, Environment Canada will be reducing

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carbon dioxide emissions by 2,000 tonnes annually, enough electricity to power about 250 homes.

That may not sound like much but that is how we will reduce emissions, step by step, with each step leading to the next step.

• (1850)

Despite everyone's voluntary efforts, we are far from achieving the goal of stabilization of greenhouse gases at 1990 levels and we know we must reduce our emissions well below stabilization as the years go on. We must redouble our efforts, work together to select and focus on implementing those measures which will have the greatest cost benefit for the environment and for the socioeconomic well-being.

The federal government will develop an implementation plan in collaboration with all our partners.

Climate change poses a real challenge for Canada, but as with any real challenge real opportunities exist. As an international leader in energy research and development, Canada's private sector will be well placed to take advantage of an increased global demand for renewable resource expertise and clean energy efficient technology. Canadian companies such as Ballard and GFI are already taking advantage of this global opportunity with support from the federal government such as Technology Partnerships Canada.

Our children and grandchildren deserve a future free of environmental and economic uncertainty. There will be costs associated with reducing our greenhouse gas emissions, but the cost of inaction will be much higher and more profound. Together with the spirit and determination which shaped our country, Canadians can meet the challenge of climate change. In so doing we can demonstrate the international leadership for which this country is renowned. Our children and our grandchildren deserve no less.

Mr. Preston Manning (Leader of the Opposition, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I rise to participate in this take note debate on global warming. Our aim is to hold the government accountable for its approach to the development of Canada's position on this issue in preparation for the third conference of the parties to the UN framework convention on climate change to be held December 1 to 10 in Kyoto, Japan.

The minister has previously indicated in the House that Canada is committed to signing a medium term, legally binding agreement for reducing CO₂ emissions to 1990 levels by the year 2010. However with only a few days left until Kyoto, the minister has yet to lay before the House in a definitive way the science on which Canada's position is based. The science, she said tonight, is sound and compelling and then she failed to present any of it.

The minister has yet to lay before the House a definitive statement of the economic, sectoral, regional and taxpayer impacts of pursuing its CO₂ emissions reduction targets. The minister cited public opinion polls, but opinion polls conducted in the absence of the presentation and knowledge of any of the impacts would certainly change the results.

The minister has yet to satisfy the House that the government has a workable agreement with the provinces or with anyone else for achieving its targets and paying the bills. In the absence of such a plan, the minister was relegated to listing anecdotes of emissions controls which however laudable do not even scratch the surface of the emissions controls required.

I suggest that surely the time for a take note debate is long overdue. Given the government's ineptitude in approaching this issue, it is time for an accountability debate and that is what we intend to present.

I would like to confine my remarks tonight to three aspects of the issue: the science of global warming; the public interest in global warming, in particular the taxpayer interest; and an alternative to the approach the government is taking.

My colleagues, particularly the official opposition critic for the environment, the hon. member for Nanaimo—Alberni, and the official opposition critic for natural resources, the hon. member for Athabasca, and other colleagues will be analysing the government's approach and position in greater detail from their perspectives.

I would like to start with global warming from a scientific perspective and present some of the information which I frankly had expected to hear from the minister tonight.

I believe that most of us as MPs should attempt to do this, to outline our layman's understanding of what science is saying on an important public issue, even at the risk of exposing ourselves to correction by experts. By doing so, we acknowledge that science has a major contribution to make to the issue at hand. By outlining however imperfectly our understanding of what science is saying, we can learn and improve our application of science to public policy. So let me try my hand at describing the greenhouse effect and global warming from a scientific perspective.

• (1855)

Science tells us first of all that the greenhouse effect is a natural phenomenon vital to the existence and preservation of life on this planet. This phenomenon is described in many scientific textbooks and in the introduction to most policy discussions on global warming. I will go through a few of these.

They usually begin by reminding us that interstellar space is a cold place. Its average temperature is -250°C. The average temperature of the earth on the other hand is 15°C, a difference of

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265 degrees. The difference is explained by the impact of the sun's radiation as a source of global warmth and the effect of greenhouse gases in the earth's atmosphere.

Greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide and water vapour which occur naturally in our atmosphere have the following properties: they are transparent to short wavelength radiations such as sunlight, but they are opaque to longer wavelength radiations such as the infrared radiation emitted by the earth. These gases therefore let sunlight through to warm the earth, but trap the infrared radiation from the earth and warm the planet by about 20°C.

Let us therefore pause, especially those of us who live in a northern climate, to express thanks for the greenhouse effect because without it, the average surface temperature of the earth would be -5°C and of course it would be uninhabitable.

It is not the greenhouse effect itself that is the current cause of consternation and the subject of international conferences like Rio de Janeiro and Kyoto. The cause of consternation, the subject of this take note debate, is the so-called enhanced greenhouse effect, the greenhouse effect enhanced by human activity, in particular the burning of fossil fuels and the probability of so-called global warming as a result.

In 1896 it was the Swedish scientist Svante Arrhenius who put forward the hypothesis that the addition of greenhouse gases from human activity would trap more infrared radiation and consequently lead to an increase in atmospheric temperatures. Today it is not disputed that man's activities over the past two centuries, in particular the burning of hydrocarbons and the destruction of forests, have led to an increase of between one-quarter and one-third of atmospheric CO₂. Similar increases of other greenhouse gases have occurred.

Since the beginning of the industrial revolution we have therefore increased the equivalent CO₂, the increase in all greenhouse gases by approximately 50%. That said, the hypothesis that global temperatures are in fact increasing over the long haul is still and should be still the subject of scientific debate. The hypothesis that increases in CO₂ emissions are the principal contributors to global warming is also and should also still be the subject of scientific debate.

The scientific literature on global warming includes evidence and argument for and against both of these hypotheses.

For example, climatologists observe that global temperatures in the 1960s and 1970s were cooler than in the 1950s. If you go back and look at their literature, particularly the popular literature of that period, the global warming theory lost ground during those years to the ice age theory.

Books such as *Ice* by Sir Fred Hoyle, an eminent scientist, *The Cooling* by Lowell Ponte, *The Genesis Strategy* by Stephen Schneider, all purporting to be based on solid science, argued that global temperatures were falling, not rising.

In 1988 however—and I am talking mainly about the North American context; you can follow a line of development in Europe and other parts of the world—the global warming theory regained attention from testimony before the U.S. Senate energy subcommittee of the commerce committee by James Hansen, head of NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies.

Hansen said: "I have a high degree of confidence that the current climate is related to enhanced greenhouse effects. Global warming is now sufficiently large that we can ascribe with a high degree of confidence a cause and effect relationship to the greenhouse effect".

● (1900)

In 1990 the UN published its scientific assessment of climate change, authored by a scientific panel. It is commonly referred to as the IPCC report. This was a scientific report, prepared and reviewed by scientists.

Its findings, however, were challenged even at the time by other scientists, leading the influential scientific journal *Nature* to say in an editorial at the time that IPCC's failure to discuss dissenting opinions, perhaps even to dismiss them, was a mistake.

The UN subsequently convened the conference on the environment and development in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. This led signatories, including Canada, to agree to limit CO₂ emissions to 1990 levels by the year 2000.

Incidentally, according to Environment Canada, a greenhouse gas inventory prepared a year after put Canada's emissions at 461 million tonnes of carbon dioxide, for the year 1999, 3.7 million tonnes of methane and approximately 92,000 tonnes of nitrous oxide.

In addition, under a business as usual scenario, it was believed that by the year 2000 Canadian emissions of carbon dioxide would grow by between 11% and 13%.

While these measurements were going on, scientists like Patrick Michaels, a climatologist at the University of Virginia, in both scientific articles and in popular books like *Sound and Fury* challenged the validity of the global climate models. These are the computer models on which much of the global warming theory is based.

DFO scientist Allyn Clarke, testifying before the parliamentary committee on the environment on November 6, 1997, said: "I don't believe that our current crop of climate models are particularly good at predicting the future. I can explain away each new climatic index as being within the range of natural variability". He is a Canadian scientist, working for the Canadian government.

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John Christy, professor of atmospheric science at the Global Hydrology and Climate Centre at the University of Alabama, argues that global temperature data collected from satellites, which is more modern than the data collected from earth based meteorological stations, do not support the theory of global warming.

A 1991 study by Friis-Christiansen and Lassen and similar studies found a correlation between solar cycle length and global temperatures, suggesting that fluctuations in solar radiation levels, not greenhouse gas emissions, were the controlling factor in climate changes over the last 100 years.

All of this brings me to the following observation on the government's approach to global warming from a scientific perspective.

An underlying weakness of the government's approach is its inability to sort out good science from bad, real science from pseudo-science and basic science from science as applied by those with vested interests in its application on either side of the issue.

Indeed, this is a special case—and this is something I have noticed since I came to this Parliament—of the government's general lack of ability and mechanisms to bring science to bear objectively and effectively on any issue of national importance.

Despite the importance of science to every aspect of our national life, this is not a science oriented government. There are very few science stories in the clipping service subscribed to by government. There are never any science illustrations, contemporary ones or anecdotes, in the speeches of the prime minister or senior ministers.

The government knows how to put on cocktail receptions for Nobel laureates but does not know how to tap into their wisdom and apply it to national policy issues.

To illustrate this further, when the minister was asked in the House the other day by the member from Kelowna which particular scientists and which particular studies she had used to form the basis of Canada's position at the Kyoto conference, she said:

Mr. Speaker, there are thousands of respected scientists throughout the world who are telling us that this is an issue we have to be concerned about. There are all kinds of science in support of the international community's signing an agreement in Kyoto, Japan.

That was all that was said.

She then jumped from this totally vague reference to thousands of scientists and all kinds of science to quoting particular references from various interest groups.

This is a completely unacceptable and, I suggest, a completely unscientific answer to a perfectly legitimate question on relevant science.

The official opposition is therefore sceptical about the alleged science behind the government's position, and for three particular reasons.

• (1905)

First, we are aware that one of the unfortunate byproducts of government policy demanding results oriented science is to create a market for biased science designed to serve political and bureaucratic interests rather than a market for free and independent science.

In the U.S. this trend is most aptly illustrated by a quote from Dr. Stephen Schneider, a global warming protagonist and adviser to U.S. Vice-President Al Gore. In an interview given by Dr. Schneider to *Discover* magazine on October 1989 he said:

On the one hand, we are ethically bound to the scientific method, in effect promising to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but—which means we must include all the doubts, caveats, ifs, and buts.

On the other hand, we are not just scientists, but human beings as well. And like most people we'd like to see the world a better place, which in this context translates into our working to reduce the risk of potentially disastrous climatic change. To do that we have to get some broad based support, to capture the public's imagination. That, of course, entails getting loads of media coverage. So we have to offer up scary scenarios, make simplified, dramatic statements, and make little mention of any doubts we might have. This 'double ethical bind' that we frequently find ourselves in cannot be solved by any formula. Each of us has to decide what the right balance is between being effective and being honest.

Before accepting the government's position on global warming, as based on legitimate science, Canadians want to be assured that it is not based on, to quote Dr. Schneider, scary scenarios made simple and dramatic with little mention of doubts, simply in order to capture public imagination and support and, I might also say, research funds from gullible governments.

Second, with respect to the record of this government in bringing science to bear on public policy, the official opposition is well aware that this House has been misled in this area before. I refer particularly to the record of this government and the previous government in bringing science to bear on the sustaining of the fisheries, particularly the Atlantic fishery.

Time and time again this House was assured that the goal of the government was the sustainable development of the fisheries, a goal which balances economic and environmental interests, the same type of thing only in a different context as what we are talking about tonight. Time and time again we were assured that science was guiding the government's pursuit of sustainability. All hon. members have heard that said at one time or another.

Now in more recent days we read stories of fishery scientists who say their science was ignored or, worse yet, twisted to serve

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political and bureaucratic ends, for example, to justify opening a depleted cod fishery for a short time just before a federal election. I wonder what scientific study led to that conclusion?

Most damning of all, we have the auditor general's recent report saying that in reality there is no clearly stated policy for sustainable fisheries in theory or in practice. Excuse us, therefore, if we are sceptical of the claims of a government that now claims it can harness science to public policy to save the planet from CO₂ emissions when it obviously could not harness science to public policy to save a fishery.

Third, we are particularly sceptical about the capacity of governments to harness science to public policy at high level conferences like Rio or Kyoto because of what I call the Meech Lake effect or the law of Meech. I am heading into new scientific ground.

The law of Meech is based on observations made at the high level constitutional conference held at Meech Lake in 1987. This was conducted with politicians, not monkeys, because it was found that the technicians were less likely to develop a personal attraction to the politicians.

At that conference 11 first ministers were locked up for three days to come up with a constitutional agreement while over 200 media persons waited outside for a dramatic pronouncement. The agreement reached at that meeting under those kinds of circumstances was so out of tune with the needs of the country and the thinking of the public, so devoid of common sense, that it was eventually discredited and rejected.

● (1910)

According to the law of Meech, therefore, the capacity of politicians in high conference with each other to deceive themselves is directly proportionate to four things: the number of politicians involved, the rank of the politicians, the length of the time they are together isolated from ordinary people, and the number of journalists, media persons, waiting outside the door panting for a story.

I suggest that this Meech Lake effect was in full operation at the Rio summit in 1992 where over 100 world leaders met in isolation from their publics for almost a week with almost 9,000 media people panting for an instant, simplistic solution to a complex problem.

I see increasing evidence of the Meech Lake effect coming into play again as the Government of Canada rushes down the road to Kyoto. Can we offer any constructive advice on how better to harness science to the development of public policy on global warming or on anything else?

Time will not permit me here to elaborate on an alternative science policy to the federal government. I think we should have a debate like that some time in this House.

Allow me to make one observation. This Parliament, indeed this government, has no effective mechanism for bringing science effectively to bear on big issues like global warming without having that advice filtered or amplified by the departments and interest groups with a strong vested interest in the content and the direction of the advice we receive.

In retrospect, it was probably a mistake to do away with the science council of Canada and the office of the chief science adviser to Canada. We should re-examine whether such institutions are in fact required. If they are, and I suspect they are, we should take particular care to ensure that their terms of reference enable them to provide that basic, objective, unfettered, scientific advice which this Parliament and this government so obviously need to deal with an issue like global warming.

I want to turn from science to consideration of the issue of global warming from the public interest perspective. This Parliament has a responsibility to determine what policy, what position on global warming is in the Canadian public interest, and the public interest is rarely, if ever, synonymous with a single interest.

It is not a matter of choosing between the protection of the environment or the growth and development of the economy, but the best balance between the two, the course of action that reconciles the two at lowest cost.

It is not a matter of choosing between the federal interest in this matter or the provincial interest but finding the position and the policy that activates and co-ordinates both federal and provincial responsibilities in this area.

It is not a matter of choosing between the interests of the coal and the oil producing provinces and the interests of the other provinces, but the position and policy that balances and reconciles the best interests of both producing and consuming interests.

I saw this neglected in the minister's presentation. Above all, since we are the Canadian Parliament and it is the position of the Canadian government we are seeking to devise, it is the interests of Canada and Canadians in all these matters that we must keep paramount.

Let me talk for a minute about balancing environmental and economic interests. Let me first of all say categorically that Reform is committed to the protection of the Canadian and global environment. We do not believe that this country or any other country can be indifferent to the real and potential environmental damage that can arise from the combustion of hydrocarbons.

When our party was founded, its statement of principles included the following statement: "We believe that Canada's identity

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and vision for the future should be rooted in and inspired by a fresh appreciation of our land and the supreme importance to our well-being of exploring, developing, renewing and conserving our natural resources and physical environment”.

We understand from the laws of conservation of energy and mass that the total weight of materials taken into an economy from nature must ultimately equal the total weight of the waste discharged plus any materials recycled. It is a great fundamental principle, economic in one dimension and ecological in another.

That means the only way to reduce the pollution burden on ecosystems in this country in absolute terms is either to reduce our economic activity or to dramatically improve our recycling capability.

• (1915)

Nations like ours, indeed all nations of the world, should begin to give as much attention to the measurement and disposition of the gross national pollution as we do to the gross national product.

We are convinced the real standard of living of our country and other countries of the world cannot be measured by GNP per capita alone as it often is. Real standard of living equals GNP per capita minus gross national pollution per capita. That equation should guide both our economic and environmental policies.

To give a more human dimension to this point, I frequently visit schools, particularly when I am on the road. I try to visit an educational institution at least once a day. When I do that I try not to give long speeches like this one. I try to get young people themselves to talk.

I often ask them what kind of country they want to live in. I have been impressed over the last 10 years by the fact that over 40% of the answers I receive are expressed in environmental terms. I want to live in a Canada where there is clean air, where there is clean water, where there are forests, where there is unpolluted land, and so forth.

Whereas our grandfathers may have defined Canada as a partnership between the English and the French and our generation may wish to define it as a partnership between equal citizens and provinces, I suspect our grandchildren may well insist the most primary definition of Canada should be as a partnership between its people and the land, between its people and its ecosystem. That would not surprise me at all.

Let it not be said that this side is indifferent to the protection of the environment and questions the adequacy of the government's approach to global warming from that perspective.

Just as we believe and I think most members in the House believe that major proposals for industrial projects require an environmental impact assessment, we believe major proposals for environmental protection require an economic impact assessment.

We have not seen that from the government with respect to CO₂ emission reductions. How can we find the right balance between

economic and environmental impacts and effects if we do not have them in the same degree of specificity on the table at the same time?

The federal government is apparently prepared to commit itself to significant reductions in GNP over the next one or two decades to stabilize CO₂ emissions at 1990 levels. If some industrial concern came before parliament or one of its committees with an industrial proposal that would increase our GDP by 1% to 3% over the next 20 years, we would insist that it provide us with a detailed assessment of the environmental impacts.

We have the government coming to us with an environmental policy proposal that could require a significant reduction in GDP. The government fails to provide an economic impact assessment. It fails to provide sectoral impact assessments. It fails to provide regional impact assessments. It fails to provide a tax impact assessment.

Where is the impact assessment from the Department of Finance or the Department of Human Resources on the number of jobs that will be lost as a result of a GDP reduction required to hit the proposed Kyoto targets?

Where is the assessment of the impact on loss of revenue to the government and the increase in the deficit? We are not arguing at this point whether it is right or wrong. We are saying where is the assessment of the impact so we can make a judgment on whether it is worth the cost.

Where is the economic impact assessment that supports the job creation and economic activity are associated with new technologies and exporting to which the minister referred?

Where is the assessment that indicates the value of that activity would come even remotely close to compensating for the job loss and curtailment of economic activity required to reduce CO₂ emissions to 1990 levels?

Where is the assessment from the transportation minister? That minister has been silent on the contraction of that sector which will result from the measures required to reduce CO₂ emissions to 1990 levels.

Where is the assessment from the natural resources minister on the contraction of the energy sector?

Where is the assessment of the trade minister on the trade impacts? Why has this not run through the entire government if the government is serious about the matter?

Where are the assessments of the so-called regional development ministers on the impacts on the west, Ontario, Quebec, the Atlantic region and the north?

In the absence of these impact assessments from the government, we have no choice but to rely on impact assessments prepared by the interests that would be directly affected.

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• (1920)

Some hon. members may consider the assessments biased, but they are more substantive than anything the government has produced. They are so sobering in their content that even if they were discounted by 50% by 75%, they could hardly be ignored.

I apologize for taking so much time, but I am doing what I had expected the minister to lay before the House. For example, the Business Council on National Issues attempted to illustrate the nature and the magnitude of the measures needed to reduce Canadian CO₂ emissions to 1990 levels. According to their calculations reductions to 1990 levels—and this is the stated Canadian position for Kyoto—would require the equivalent of one of the following measures: a shutdown of 40% of Canada's agricultural, petrochemical, industrial processing, metal production and other industries utilizing hydrocarbon processing or combustion in the production process; or a shutdown of the entire upstream oil and gas exploration industry; or a shutdown of all agriculture and the heating of 25% of Canadian homes; or the removal of 50% of all Canadian passenger vehicles from the highways.

If members think those measures are bad, take a look at the aim to reduce CO₂ emission to 1990 levels minus 5%, which is the Japanese position. That would require the equivalent of one of the following measures: the removal of 85% of all Canadian passenger vehicles; or the removal of 75% of commercial transportation vehicles, that is trucks, and the elimination of all air, railway and marine transportation; or the elimination of the heating of all commercial buildings and virtually all homes.

What they are doing here is simply illustrating the magnitude of what is involved with even a so-called small percentage reduction in GDP over this time period.

Our Prime Minister is striving to compete with the nations of the world to see who is the greatest leader. If the aim is to reduce CO₂ emissions to 1990 levels, minus 15%, which is the EEC position, that would require the equivalent of one of the following measures: the removal of all Canadian passenger vehicles and 80% of all commercial vehicles, that is just about all of Canada's motor vehicles being off the road; or a shutdown of all hydrocarbon fuel generation and all air, railway and marine transportation; or a shutdown of all Canadian industries which utilize hydrocarbon processing or combustion in the production process.

That is only one set of analyses, the economic impact analysis by an interest group. Even if it is discounted by 75%, the magnitudes are far bigger than we have ever heard said by the minister.

Turning to another model developed by the Government of Canada, the DRI McGraw Hill analysis has been done on various regional impacts of stabilizing emissions at 1990 levels. We are

talking about regional impacts, not gross economic impacts. This analysis demonstrates the effect of stabilization of greenhouse gas emissions at 1990 levels by the year 2000 as compared to business as usual projections.

Its conclusion is that all regions suffer considerable declines through to the year 2010. The biggest impacts occur in the fossil fuel dependent provinces, with Alberta suffering increasingly negative impacts through 2020. Negative impacts are suffered by all regions, with the negative impacts in Ontario almost equalling those in the western provinces.

An analysis done by Charles River Associates in the U.S. has been used to look at the trade impacts. We expected the trade minister to bring this analysis to the House. It has not come and we are only a few days from Kyoto.

This study shows Canada to be the worst affected among the G-7 countries. This trend continues to the year 2030. The DRI model has also been used to analyse the export performance of various sectors under emission constraints compared to a business as usual scenario. Not surprisingly, the biggest decline is in the energy sector, particularly coal. Also significant is the impact in energy intensive sectors such as iron and steel, chemicals, mining, and pulp and paper. Many of these sectors will lose market share to competitors in developing countries.

We are now seeing, belatedly, various industrial and economic interests throughout the country beginning to come forward to the natural resources committee, the environment committee and individual members of Parliament, presenting their own assessments of the possible impact of various CO₂ emission control levels on their industry, on their companies and on their unions.

• (1925)

We see estimates of job losses including—and I will just give two that I am familiar with—up to 10,000 to 12,000 jobs lost to the coal industry alone, 2,500 to 3,500 direct jobs in the coal industry in Alberta, Saskatchewan and Nova Scotia, and direct and indirect oil and gas job losses as high as 56,000 including spinoff effects.

These interests will concentrate on one side of the story. We know that. Perhaps some of them will exaggerate the impacts. We know that. However, our task is to try to get all major impacts on the table to assess them as objectively as we can and to define the proper balance.

There is another interest I want to touch on. What is most disturbing of all to us is that the one interest most likely to be dramatically affected by whatever positions we take at Kyoto does not even seem to have entered into the equation or the calculation of the government's position. I refer to that long suffering, oft forgotten interest, the interest of the Canadian taxpayer.

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When the UN framework convention on climate change was agreed to in 1992 with the aim of limiting CO₂ emissions to 1990 levels by the year 2000, there was much talk at that time among the governments and trading blocs involved about meeting this target through the imposition of a tax on fossil fuels. That was the most frequently mentioned mechanism for paying for the targets that were agreed to in Rio.

The precise form of this tax was not specified but most economists talk about a carbon tax, which would mean that at some point in the chain from producer to consumer a levy, probably paid to the government of the state in which the sale took place, is imposed on the sale of fossil fuels. The size of the tax would be proportionate to the carbon content of the fuel, with coal having the highest carbon content and methane having the lowest.

Canadians know that Liberals have an instinct. It must be bred into them. We do not know where it comes from. This would perhaps be a good subject for a scientific study. They have an instinct to try to solve every problem ultimately by increasing taxes. That is how the finance minister effectively tackled the deficit. Most of it was through an increase in tax revenues. It is the solution they put forward for fixing the Canada pension plan, a 73% hike in payroll tax.

The suspicion is that at the end of the day, after all the fuzzy talk, the approach the government will take to endeavour to pay for whatever it commits to in Kyoto will be a tax.

It is time for the federal government to come clean, although it is pretty late in the day, on how will it pay for its targeted reductions in CO₂ emissions. Will it be carbon taxes, energy taxes, fuel taxes, greenhouse taxes, direct taxes or indirect taxes?

Energy industry analysts have estimated that if the bulk of the cost of meeting the target of CO₂ levels is borne through fuel taxes, this could result in a price increase at the pumps of 10¢, 20¢ or 30¢ a litre, depending on which assumptions we use. If the government has ruled out a carbon tax, as the Prime Minister has said, if it has ruled out a fuel tax, what other taxes does it have in mind?

The federal government has a moral and fiscal obligation to come clean on the subject with the public, and it has singularly failed to do so.

We have looked at the environmental impacts, the economic impacts, the sectoral impacts and the taxpayer impacts. Let me look at one more combination of interests, the balancing of the federal and provincial interest in this matter. We are, after all, a federal state.

In a federal system like Canada, the development of any position on environmental protection, particularly one that has significant ramifications for the economy, must be a co-operative effort between federal and provincial governments. Under our constitu-

tion responsibility for environmental protection is a shared responsibility. Both federal and provincial governments have responsibilities in the area of economic development as well.

As I have previously stated, we do not believe the federal government, even at this late date, has clearly stated what interest it intends to advance and protect in developing its negotiating position for Kyoto, or how it intends to implement and pay for its commitments. This makes it extremely difficult for the provinces to know where they stand or even to be able to agree to the commitments.

• (1930)

We do know, from the meeting of federal, provincial and territorial energy environment ministers on November 12, 1997 in Regina, that the provincial ministers are prepared to agree to the following: one, reliance on joint implementation and technology transfers as ways to reduce greenhouse gas emissions globally; two, continued scientific research on such subjects as reforestation, alternate energy sources, technology transfers and research into climatic change itself; three, expansion and promotion of the volunteer challenge registration program, which we support; and four, the expansion of innovative approaches, such as emissions trading, which of course would require major changes in all of Canada's regulatory legislation which we have not seen any evidence of at all.

What strikes the objective outside observer is that this hastily prepared short list barely scratches the surface of what would be required to meet the stated target of reducing aggregate greenhouse gas emissions in Canada back to 1990 levels.

Again there is a gaping hole in the Regina statement as to how any such effort is to be financed. Even the overall target referred to in the November 12 statement was put in doubt just eight days later—this is how permanent these commitments are—when the Prime Minister implied to Premiers Tobin and Klein that in his misguided desire to look better than the Americans on this issue, perhaps a new target should be adopted by lowering GHG emissions to 1990 levels by the year 2007. That was eight days after the firm commitment was made in Regina.

Parliament must therefore conclude that the federal government has not even scratched the surface in identifying and reconciling federal and provincial interests in implementing and paying for an action plan for reducing CO₂ emissions.

This task, which should have been accomplished prior to Kyoto, apparently will be tackled, from what the minister said tonight, after Kyoto. It is a classic case of getting the cart before the horse.

Repeatedly in the House the minister, in an obvious effort to divert attention from the poverty of the government's approach and position, has asked what is Reform's position. It may be that

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the minister is subconsciously anticipating the day when Reform is the government. However, as of this hour we are the official opposition, the Liberals form the government, and our task is to hold the government accountable for the failures and weaknesses of its positions.

We do not have the resources to do the work of the Department of the Environment with its 4,000-plus employees and its budget of over \$575 million. However, what we do have to offer is an alternative process for ascertaining and reconciling the legitimate interests—the environmental interest, the health interest, the business and commercial interest, the provincial interest, the consumer interest, the worker interest, the taxpayer interest—which must be reconciled if the government is to have a credible position.

The government has put the cart before the horse. It goes to international conferences where it is subject to all the pressures of the Meech Lake effect and it agrees in advance to certain targets and standards. It has, in effect, agreed to sign a treaty at Kyoto even before that treaty has been negotiated, having made commitments and having held the press conferences, which seem to be the most important part of this exercise. It then will proceed to negotiate with the people who will be directly affected by those commitments, the private sector and the provinces while, as I have mentioned, ignoring certain interests, in particular the taxpayers' interests, altogether. It is a classic case of putting the cart before the horse.

Our alternative process is simply this. Number one, get the Canadian position first by negotiating with our key players. Define a Canadian position on CO₂ emissions that is particular to this country; a big, cold, northern, exporting country.

Number two, having secured some agreement in principle on appropriate CO₂ emission levels for this country, then secure agreement on implementation and who pays. I do not think someone is serious on this issue until they address the issue of who pays. It is always the last thing to be considered in this House. It ought to be the first. It is because it was the last thing in this House to be considered that we ended up with the deficits we did and a \$600 billion debt.

Number three, having reached that position at home, that is the Canadian position which should be taken to Kyoto to be negotiated in good faith with the other players.

Number four, if an agreement is reached that is close to or better than the Canadian position, then sign.

Number five, if no such agreement is reached, do not sign. It is better to be honest and say we cannot meet commitments beyond our capability than to sign simply for the purposes of temporary favourable press clippings, only to fail to keep our commitments, which is exactly the case that happened in Rio.

• (1935)

This is our alternative. It is an alternative process and we firmly believe it would lead to a more responsible position than that of the government, a scientifically sound position, a position in the Canadian public interest and a position capable of implementation.

I have one final word for the Prime Minister. I cannot for the life of me understand where the Prime Minister is coming from on this issue. In his desire to be seen as a good green fellow at international environmental gatherings, he seems to have forgotten where he lives and whom he represents.

The Prime Minister needs to be reminded that he is not the Prime Minister of a unitary state. He is the Prime Minister of a federation where joint action on the environment requires federal-provincial agreement prior to making international agreements.

The Prime Minister needs to be reminded that he is not the Prime Minister of Fiji where they can survive without much extra energy. He is the Prime Minister of Canada, a northern country, with one of the coldest climates in the world.

He needs to be reminded that 24 Sussex Drive is not on the Equator. It is at 45° north latitude in Ottawa, which the diplomatic corps assures me is the coldest capital in the world next to Ulan Bator in Mongolia.

He needs to be reminded that he is not the Prime Minister of Belgium, a small country that can be driven across in a few hours. He is the Prime Minister of the second largest country in the world, a northern exporting country of immense distances that has an energy requirement for transportation, an energy requirement for heating just for survival, an energy requirement for manufacturing and processing that is particular to this country and requires a particularized approach to CO₂ emission limits.

In other words, the Prime Minister needs to be reminded that he is the Prime Minister of Canada, in all its dimensions, federal, ecological, and economic.

If he forgets that, as he and his government appear to have done, the road to Kyoto will be a road to failure, not the road to a better world and a better tomorrow.

Take note, Prime Minister, please. Take note.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to speak on a matter of utmost importance: global warming.

As we speak, millions of tons of carbon dioxide are being released into the atmosphere. North America alone is responsible for more than 25% of these emissions that are having an unprecedented effect on our atmosphere.

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How should we react to this major challenge? That is the question we must ask ourselves, the purpose of the debate we are having tonight.

But first of all, let us take a brief look at history. Society took a long time to realize basic things concerning the environment. For some time already, scientific experts around the world have been noticing that, over the past century, the globe has been warming up faster than before. Many research teams have looked into this serious problem to seek out its causes. One after the other, these teams have released their troubling findings, that human activity is responsible for global warming.

Their findings were immediately challenged by numerous sceptics, and from what I could see this evening, the leader of the official opposition is one of them. However, many sceptics, not counting the leader of the official opposition, were shocked to learn that humans could have such a major effect on the atmosphere. For the longest time, like the environmentalists, these scientific experts were doomed to be a voice crying in the wilderness. But since the mid-1980s, a growing number of people have started to realize how serious this environmental problem is.

Having recovered from the effects of the 1982 economic crisis, society is realizing how extensive and diverse environmental problems are. The ensuing expansion of the debate was beneficial to us all.

● (1940)

The environment quickly became a major concern for the whole of society. Public opinion developed an awareness and began to support experts and political leaders for greater protection of the environment.

After facing the numerous challenges relating to the protection of our water, air, forests and soil, we turned to issues of a more global nature, such as greenhouse gases. At the international level, these issues require the implementation of global and co-ordinated measures by all the nations.

This led to the signature in Helsinki, in 1984, of the first international protocol to reduce transborder emissions responsible for acid rain.

Three years later, in 1987, Montreal hosted an international meeting that led to the signing of what was called the Montreal protocol, the purpose of which is to reduce the production of gases harmful to the ozone layer.

Five years later, in 1992, over 150 nations got together in Rio for the earth summit. This meeting led to the signing of a UN framework agreement to limit concentrations of greenhouse gases. At this unprecedented summit, developed countries set as a common goal to stabilize greenhouse gas emissions at the 1990 level by the year 2000.

Today, five years later, we are faced with the same potential disasters. Why? Because several countries, including Canada, did not manage to reach their objectives.

The Liberal government, which has been in office since 1993, seemingly put more effort into using doublespeak regarding the environment than in applying concrete measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

There are numerous examples. On April 24, the Liberal government came up with an advertisement highlighting their achievements, in which it claimed to have been a leader on the international scene, by helping reduce the causes of climate change in the world. However, nothing could be further from the truth. Canada's performance regarding greenhouse gas levels is one of the worst.

Indeed, compared to other OECD members, Canada did poorly in terms of reducing greenhouse gases, in spite of Quebec's good performance, which should not go unnoticed. It should be remembered that in Quebec, there is an average of nine tons of carbon dioxide emissions per capita, whereas the Canadian average is 18 tons, while in Alberta, it reaches the unacceptable level of 56 tons per capita. Quebec is in a position to meet the objectives set in Rio. However, for the whole of Canada, observers expect that instead there will be an increase of 13% in emissions by the year 2000. Quite a performance for a government that likes to brag about its leadership in this area.

Unfortunately, the government's failure to act in this issue extends beyond that. Of all the G-7 countries, Canada will be the last one to present its negotiating position at the Kyoto summit. That is some leadership when hiding one's own position seems to be the objective.

Since we are still waiting for this so-called final position, we have to rely on the only public position that was endorsed by the Minister of the Environment and the Minister of Natural Resources, the so-called Regina agreement.

During that meeting, the environment and natural resources ministers from all ten provinces were invited by the federal government to discuss the objectives for greenhouse gas emission reductions. The rest of Canada managed to agree on only one thing: to delay for ten years the environmental commitments made by Canada at Rio. No reduction objective was discussed.

That meeting is an unfortunate setback for the environmental cause in Canada. That meeting showed the ministers giving in to the demands of the oil lobby.

● (1945)

Having recorded one of the worse increases in emissions among the OECD countries, after being the last G-7 country to submit a negotiating position for Kyoto, with what is called the Regina agreement, the Liberal government is assured of presenting one of

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the lowest reduction objectives among the industrialized countries in attendance at Kyoto.

Yet at the international conference at Berlin in 1995, the attending countries clearly agreed that stabilizing emissions would not be sufficient to eradicate the negative effects of global warming caused by human activity.

It is inevitable that what we do not do today, we will have to do tomorrow. Not taking action today means saddling future generations with an even heavier burden. In deciding to restrict itself to a sensible stabilization of emissions until the year 2010, the Canadian government is choosing inaction as its action plan for meeting one of the most important challenges facing the planet, contrary to its promises.

This government got itself elected in 1993 by promising to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 20% before the year 2005. Today, it is putting its 1992 commitments off for ten years.

In their government publication, the Liberals tell the public that it is time for action to reduce greenhouse gases. Yet, when they sit down together at Regina, they decide instead to put their promises off for another ten years.

The federal Minister of Natural Resources, seemingly totally unconcerned by any contradiction, has taken the Liberal derision further still. He said a bargaining position like Regina's would enable Canada to build bridges and promote consensus in Kyoto. Since when does the individual with the weakest position at the bargaining table promote consensus?

Are we to understand from this statement that it is the firm intention of the Liberals to go to Kyoto to build international consensus around immobility? This would seem to be the government's position.

On the same day that the Liberal government and all the provinces but Quebec reached an agreement in Regina, the Minister of Finance was making a speech at the University of Toronto. In it he said that the economic growth we are aiming at is a reflection of the quality of life Canadians deserve.

If Canadians' quality of life is really of interest to the Minister of Finance, perhaps he should have a look at the major studies done by the Department of Environment on the impact on Canada of the rapid warming of the climate. The most significant of these studies indicates that we should expect higher mortality and more disease if we do not act quickly to stop climate changes. More specifically, the study provides that the heatwaves caused by global warming will raise the rates of death and disease particularly among young people, old people, the chronically ill and those whose health is

fragile. In short, the consequences of failing to act now could be disastrous.

With only a few days before the start of international negotiations in Kyoto, all speakers in this House should drop their arguments and work together to find a constructive solution to this major problem of humanity.

Our era has been marked by frenetic, even aggressive development. Now it is time to be cautious, self disciplined and mindful of nature. This is the message sent in 1986 by the United Nations commission on the environment and development chaired Prime Minister Gro Brundtland of Norway. The work of this commission gave rise to what we now call sustainable development. Growth and the environment are not mutually exclusive, rather they should be used together.

We have to recognize that the extension of respect for individuals lies in respect for their surroundings. We have to protect the environment of this planet out of respect for what our forefathers bequeathed us and a sense of responsibility toward future generations.

- (1950)

For its part, the Bloc Quebecois, through its environment critic, the member for Rosemont, has been calling for serious commitments from Ottawa for several weeks now. Throughout the debate, we have stressed the importance of this issue for the environment and the economy.

We feel that the federal government must make serious formal commitments at the Kyoto conference with respect to reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Only serious objectives to significantly reduce carbon dioxide emissions would confirm its desire to tackle this major problem.

In addition, the provinces, particularly the worst polluters, must also undertake to do more.

There must be clear and concrete objectives in order to avoid backsliding. We must do better than the Americans' timid objective. We must aim even higher than Japan's objective, which is to reduce by 5% from 1990 levels by the year 2012.

Ratification by all provinces of the Kyoto convention is vital in attaining the objectives set. The Rio agreement, it will be remembered, was ratified only by Quebec and British Columbia. All provinces must make efforts consistent with their situation. It is a question of equity.

Finally, while the Bloc Quebecois is interested in the objectives, it is even more interested in seeing them met. This is why an independent compliance committee composed of experts and private citizens should be created to ensure that, within Canada, the federal government and the provinces follow up on the commitments made in Kyoto through periodic public reports.

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In closing, I would like to stress the major role governments play in protecting the environment. As parliamentarians, we must set an example and be attentive to the possible impact of our actions on the future. Global warming is a major problem, and the long term impact on society may be devastating.

We all have a collective responsibility to protect our environment.

[English]

Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, let me say how very pleased I am this evening to have the opportunity to participate in this very important debate in the run up to the Kyoto conference next month. I have to say in all honesty so far I feel a little like Alice in Wonderland.

First of all we were treated to some comments by the environment minister who I must say made a reasonably solid case. In fact I would say she made quite a convincing case for why we desperately need leadership from the Government of Canada to tackle the problems associated with climate change. It is the very environment minister who apparently has attempted but failed to persuade her colleagues of the critical importance of this challenge.

It leaves one somewhat worried. Once again we see an example of where the more progressive elements within the Liberal caucus—and I am certainly prepared to acknowledge that the environment minister falls within that category—are nevertheless overshadowed and prevailed upon by the regressive elements in the Liberal caucus. What we get instead is a total absence of leadership.

It is a situation where at this point in time we are coming up to Kyoto with absolutely no clear indication from the Government of Canada of where it stands and what it intends to do on behalf of the Canadian people who have elected them to office and who have been looking to them for leadership.

• (1995)

Then we heard the Reform leader again very effectively in his usual eloquent way damning the government for its record in regard to climate change. I want to quote directly and I hope I got the exact words. It seemed to me to be an absolutely classic statement by the Reform leader when he said that we have had a government “panting for a simplistic solution for a complex problem”. I have to say that I have never heard a better description of how the Reform Party of Canada conducts itself day in and day out in this House and outside of this Parliament in regard to practically every single issue of public policy.

We then heard the Reform leader once again make the case that who pays for this should be the single most important question. He went on, as he does so often, to define the public interest as being

absolutely identical and equal to the concept of the taxpayers’ interests. That vision of Canada is a bankrupt vision that is causing a lot of Canadians to lose heart these days about the amount of influence that the Reform Party has on the current federal government.

I think most Canadians see the issue of the public interest in a much broader way. They understand that it has something to do with citizenship, with community and with our sense of pride as a nation. To define the public interest in the narrowest possible terms as having exclusively to do with taxpayers’ interests is an abdication of leadership it seems to me.

Finally we heard the Reform leader offer up his astounding statement about how in his view one had to recognize that there was, I guess, a pretty even balance between the international consensus that exists around the globe today among highly respected scientists, among independent peer review scientific evidence and the so-called scientific evidence that is offered up by the high paid lobbyists on behalf of the narrowest of economic interests.

To equate those two and say that they have to be balanced and they leave us not really knowing for sure whether the scientific evidence is sound is again, I think, an act of deception. It is the opposite of the kind of leadership that Canadians are looking to their parliamentarians to provide.

Moving on from there and travelling through this world of wonderland we then heard the Bloc leader. The Bloc leader in his comments tonight and the presentations that his colleagues have made in recent weeks have taken a more progressive view than the other two parties. It is certainly a more enlightened view with respect to the whole issue of climate change.

What we heard tonight was that in the process of the Bloc leader applauding the record of his own provincial government, the Government of Quebec, in regard to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, he really advanced one of the most convincing cases that I could ever hope to hear for why we need a strong federal government from coast to coast to coast in this country to provide leadership on this kind of issue.

The Bloc leader knows perfectly well that we live in an immensely diverse country, that we have very different regional economies, that the energy base and the economic base from one province to another differ greatly. I know he understands that given the fact the province of Quebec is blessed with a very generous amount of hydro energy, its economic base and its energy source are very different from those of provinces that depend upon a more carbon based energy source.

• (2000)

What he understands I am sure, and what I think increasingly Canadians are coming to understand, is how barren the notion is

that somehow we should be able to lay on a uniform formula across the country and say every provincial government and the people of every province should expect to make the exact same contribution based on the exact same formula for greenhouse gas emission reduction.

That is not reality. We need to be clear that people sometimes try to make fun of the fact that European nations have come forward with the most progressive proposals for greenhouse gas reduction and that we understand the so called European bubble effect that allows for some flexibility across the European nations on which countries are going to be able reduce their greenhouse gas emissions most and in which particular way.

This is a phenomenon which also needs to be understood in the Canadian context. This is precisely why we desperately need leadership from the federal government. There are many different ways in which different parts of the country can and should be expected to contribute to greenhouse gas emissions. No uniform formula laid across the nation is going to do it. The impacts are going to be different. The measures are going to be different.

That is precisely the tragedy about the complete failure of the federal government to date to provide any real leadership in working with the provincial governments partners to achieve an overall strategy and to begin to address Canada's responsibility to meet its commitments made in Rio in 1992.

In answers to questions which I have raised, which others have raised, my colleagues in the NDP caucus and others in other caucuses as well, again and again we have heard members on the government side and a number of different ministers say do not talk to us, go and talk to the provinces. They do not seem willing to just sign on at the eleventh hour as we are on our way out of town to Kyoto. No wonder they are not able to just sign on. There has been absolutely no leadership from the government in any meaningful way for the past four years.

I am not in the habit of rushing to the defence of the Conservative caucus. I thought this debate around greenhouse gas emissions reached an all time level absurdity when I heard I believe the finance minister or some minister on the front benches of the government rip into the Conservative leader who was pushing for progress on this, saying it was really your fault because he was the energy minister in Rio in 1992 and you came back to Canada and you completely failed to implement a comprehensive strategy that would move us in the direction of meeting our commitments made in Rio in 1992. Think about the absurdity of it.

I profess no expertise in what went on before I came to this Parliament, but it is my understanding that such measures did begin to get under way in 1992 and into early 1993. One is hard pressed to find that the current Liberal government has done much of anything every since.

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Hon. Jean J. Charest: Ten points for honesty.

• (2005)

Ms. Alexa McDonough: I did not hear the comment of my hon. colleague, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Jean J. Charest: Ten points for honesty.

Ms. Alexa McDonough: I appreciate that. The Conservative leader has said that at least you get some points for honesty.

Canadians want to see honesty in this debate. Canadians want to see integrity in this debate. What they want to see is a federal government that is willing to tell the truth to Canadians. Yes, we have a lot of work to do to catch up. No, we have not made any significant progress whatsoever in the direction of meeting our commitments.

We talk in terms of meeting our commitments in Rio in 1992. What we need to be very clear about is that in 1992 nations around the world began to face up to the fact that it was going to take a global effort to begin to address what is a growing crisis with respect to climate change.

It is a matter of weeks before the government goes to the international conference in Kyoto to represent the interests of Canadians. We do not have a clue what the position of the Government of Canada will be on our behalf. It is absolutely humiliating.

Surely the Prime Minister of Canada must have felt some sense of embarrassment that before leaving Canada, the Prime Minister of Japan joined the chorus of concerned Canadians in pleading for the Prime Minister of Canada to finally make his position known with respect to the upcoming conference in Kyoto. I am sure that is not what the Prime Minister had in mind when he invited the Prime Minister of Japan to participate in the APEC conference.

I would suggest that it is darn well time that the Prime Minister started to understand that the very government which is responsible to provide leadership on this issue is far behind the Canadian public, and that is an embarrassment. It certainly gives a very different notion of this government's idea of what leadership is all about.

So far the position of the Canadian government is a sort of half-hearted commitment that we will do a little better than the United States at Kyoto. The government argues that the reason for not being more specific about it is because it needs some flexibility at Kyoto.

Given the record of this government on climate change and its failure to provide any meaningful leadership on greenhouse gas emission reductions, Canadians generally are nervous that the kind of flexibility which the Government of Canada wants is flexibility

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that will allow it to drop below whatever commitment the U.S. makes with respect to climate change. Why else would we have the government arguing that it needs flexibility instead of setting its sights higher and talking about developing the kind of strategy which is necessary to ensure that we achieve those targets?

It is absolutely critical that the Government of Canada go to Kyoto and stake out a strong position. If we continue to ignore the signs and the damaging effects of a changing climate, then we have acted extremely irresponsibly with respect to future generations of Canadians.

Despite the hysteria of the Reform Party on this issue, the science is clear. Yes, of course there are some scientists who will say they are not completely convinced by the evidence they see that the problem is of the magnitude that the overwhelming consensus of scientists have assessed it to be.

• (2010)

We have heard scientist after scientist after scientist provide evidence that I think has to be taken seriously. As I say, there is an international consensus that this is a problem that we have a responsibility to face up to as a family of nations.

I do not know what is the most accurate prediction, but when one hears large numbers of respected scientific bodies predicting, for example, that by the year 2100 the average global temperature will increase by 3.5° Celsius, we know that we have a very serious problem on our hands and that the full impact of changes that will result from those kinds of climate changes, those kinds of temperature increases, would be absolutely devastating.

There would be more frequent and severe hurricanes and storms, widespread drought in some areas. In other areas there would be flooding, the extinction of many plant and animal species, widespread coastal flooding and erosion and even the disappearance of low-lying islands. We are talking about islands of human beings that could literally disappear into the ocean if we do not face up to this problem and take some leadership. There would be massive economic losses in forestry, agriculture and fisheries for example.

We have heard a lot of arguments in this House in recent weeks, particularly from Reform but also from the regressive wing of the Liberal Party that seems to prevail in this debate, that we need to know the costs associated with meeting our commitments at Rio and any commitments that we make at Kyoto.

Let me say that I absolutely agree with that. Of course we need to know the cost. What I think a lot of Canadians find objectionable and what my colleagues and I find absolutely profoundly ignorant is the viewpoint that keeps getting put forward again and again that somehow there are no real costs associated with not doing

anything about dealing with the impending crisis in climate change.

Make no mistake about it, there are significant costs. There are economic costs, environmental costs and health costs associated with the do-nothing approach that this Liberal government has taken to date with respect to climate change.

What scientists, doctors, economists, environmentalists all understand and what the government and my colleagues on the far right steadfastly refuse to understand is that doing something to reduce greenhouse gases, to taking up this challenge of dealing with the crisis of climate change can actually be a powerful job creator. The economy can and should benefit from addressing this problem if it is addressed responsibly, if it is addressed comprehensively and if it is addressed in an innovative way.

Preventing global warming means investing in people and in businesses who are developing clean technologies. It means investing in new technologies like solar and wind power that create jobs.

What Canada needs is a comprehensive plan that includes building retrofits, that includes electricity reform, that includes more fuel efficient vehicles, greater access to public transit and greater industrial innovation, all of which can be powerful job creators.

Let me give one example. The climate action network and the Sierra Club have developed a rational energy program, a program that calculates measures to reduce greenhouse gases and create jobs. Their proposal, which has been analysed by respected economists, would indicate that over a five year period the measures that they have proposed are capable of creating over 500,000 jobs, over half a million jobs.

• (2015)

The tragedy about how little this government has done to get on with this task is that it is not only important to do for environmentally sound reasons, it is not only important to do for energy conservation reasons, it is also important to do in a country that continues to have close to a million and a half people unemployed.

Surely any government worth its salt, any government that is prepared to call itself a leader has to understand that there can only be a win-win situation in environmental and economic terms resulting from our taking hold of this problem and getting on with it.

Let me just cite a couple of examples of the kind of job creation outcomes and the kind of job creation programs that are proposed by those who have taken a serious look and carefully analysed what it is we need to do.

Building retrofit programs that conserve energy. Some members scoff at that and say it sounds like Mickey Mouse stuff. The reality

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is that thousands and thousands of jobs can be created in comprehensive retrofitting programs and they can be paid for in the savings effected in energy consumption.

Urban transit and other transportation initiatives. It is not rocket science. It is not as if we were waiting for some kind of invention to know what to do. But the tragedy is that this government has virtually gutted some of the programs that had us on the right course with respect to a bigger commitment to public transit for example.

There are other jobs created through supporting research and development that are capable of greater energy efficiency and renewable energy sources.

There are additional economic benefits to reducing the effects of global warming. Direct savings in energy costs are a direct benefit. For those who insist on talking only about the costs associated with our tackling this problem, it is time to look at what some of the real benefits can be.

There is the growth of energy efficient and renewable energy technologies and the avoidance of environmental damage and health costs associated with pollutants such as sulphur dioxide that accompany greenhouse gases.

We heard earlier this week scientific evidence and some of it coming directly from the environment department about how worrisome it is to see the increasing health problems associated with greenhouse gas emissions and how much more severe that problem is going to be if we do not very quickly get on with addressing it in an urgent way. The fact is that our global environment simply cannot absorb our ever increasing pollution.

At the same time here in Canada and even more desperately in developing countries like China and India, people need jobs so that they can feed their families and they can achieve a decent standard of living. The people and the businesses that can develop clean and efficient technologies, that can take up this challenge will address those two fundamental needs, the need for jobs and the need to ensure a clean environment for future generations.

We already see evidence that innovative businesses that can accomplish this twin objective are going to be in great demand around the world. They will be the employers of the future who can provide competitive and exciting jobs and opportunities for our young people. Surely we need no reminder that this must be a very high priority since we live in a country where some 25% of our young people are unemployed and their first experience with a job is no job at all.

• (2020)

If we act now to prevent global warming, we can win on both counts. We can win in respect to jobs and we can win in respect to a

cleaner environment. If we get on with it, we can lay the cornerstone for a new dynamic and a cleaner economy.

It is on that basis that my colleagues and I embraced a policy to commit to the reduction of greenhouse gases by 20% from 1990 levels by the year 2005. Some will say that surely that goal is no longer realistic. It certainly is true that this government has provided so little leadership and there has been so little progress in getting on with the kind of comprehensive measures that are needed that it does seem very difficult to imagine how we can attain those objectives. I have heard no argument as to why we should not get on urgently with beginning to tackle the job.

In case government members need a reminder, these targets were not pulled out of thin air. These targets could not be described as totally irresponsible and irrational. We remind the Liberal members that in their own red book in the 1993 election, they stated very clearly that that goal was attainable.

I believe the finance minister in his bid for the leadership of the Liberal Party said that we could do better than those reduction levels. The Liberals came to office in 1993 and the previous environment minister committed herself to those levels. She did so in writing. Surely it cannot be said that these are completely irresponsible, irrational targets to put forward.

The problem is that this government is going to Kyoto virtually empty handed without being able to demonstrate any progress toward these objectives because it has failed to put in place the kind of comprehensive strategies that are needed to ensure we make progress toward those objectives.

As important as it is for us to go to Kyoto and enter into an agreement to achieve some reasonable progressive levels of greenhouse gas emissions reductions, the real work begins when the delegation returns from Kyoto. We must ensure that we put in place the kind of plan of action that was not put in place after Rio. We need a plan that can get us on a path both to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to enhance our economy and our environment.

Some would say that surely this is all just a pipe dream, that it is not realistic, that it is just a lot of talk, that we do not really have at hand the concrete measures that are needed. That is simply not true. We talked briefly about Germany. The German government has actually implemented 109 different measures to tackle the problem of climate change. That means making a real commitment that goes far beyond the kind of token measures that the Government of Canada holds up and says "No, no, we are doing something". It means going far beyond the voluntary programs and putting in place solid regulatory regimes and putting in place the kind of incentive programs that will produce real results.

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• (2025)

Comprehensive programs to assist companies to become more environmentally sound and more energy efficient. Measures to assist the construction and expansion of public transit in its many different forms. Measures with the benefit of federal funding to put in place more energy efficient forms of housing and public buildings. What we have seen in the last couple of years is the Liberal government pulling the plug on its commitment to social housing for example, at a time when there is a job to be done here that would help us move in the direction of greater energy efficiency.

In conclusion, I simply want to once again reiterate the plea to the Prime Minister, to the Minister of the Environment and to the entire Liberal government to begin taking this seriously, to begin to understand and tell Canadians the truth, that we can only win, it can be a win-win scenario for Canadians in terms of both jobs and the environment if we get on with the task. Let me say that the failure to do so is a failure to protect the interests, the health and the livelihood of future generations of Canadians.

Hon. Jean J. Charest (Sherbrooke, PC): Mr. Speaker, I participate in this debate with a great deal of anticipation given the importance of this issue and the personal interest I have in it and the interest my caucus has also taken in this issue.

I can certainly report to the House that our critic for the environment, the hon. member for Fundy—Royal who is only 33 years old and one of the newest members but one that we are very proud of, has worked extremely hard in helping us develop this position. He is not alone. He is going to join a number of members of this place and other houses in all political parties who over the years have cared a great deal about this issue.

I want to single out tonight the fact that we do have in the House of Commons the past Minister of the Environment, the member for Davenport, who has served in that portfolio in the past. I want to use this opportunity tonight to tell members that when I had the privilege of being the head of Canada's delegation in Rio, he accompanied the delegation.

I had the opportunity of doing some events with him and he was well remembered. I remember this distinctly because I thought gee, one day I may retire from the department. He was well remembered by his colleagues. He has maintained an interest in this issue, a sincere and real interest. He is here tonight. He is one of those who has made a lasting contribution to this debate.

Also the member for Lac-Saint-Louis was the minister of environment in the province of Quebec and the parliamentary secretary for environment. I had the added pleasure of working with him on a few key issues, cross-border issues. He was one of the most appreciated, well remembered ministers of environment

ever in the province of Quebec. And so what, he is on the wrong side of the House.

A number of people have taken a keen interest in this issue. I do want to take a second to thank the leader of the NDP for her remarks in regard to Rio, in regard to the record. It is in fact a rare occurrence in this House when a member is able and gracious enough to correct the record in that way.

I suspect it may have something to do with the fact that a past member from the riding of Rosedale if I remember correctly was also part of the Canadian delegation. He himself was very involved in the leadership and in the way the delegation was conducted. He would have some intimate knowledge of what happened in Rio. And so, Mr. Speaker, on that lighter note I want to offer some of our views on this very important issue.

• (2030)

First, I would like to direct my remarks as to how this whole issue of environment and sustainable development relates to Canada and to the future of our country by saying as succinctly but as clearly as I can how important an issue it is for Canada more than any other country in the world. There are a few reasons for this. First is because we have this great land mass. We have the second biggest country in the world in terms of land mass. We have three oceans that surround us. We have a very fragile northern environment. For this reason alone this issue of climate change and global warming will have more impact on us by virtue of the geography than any other country.

There is another reason that is even more compelling, the economic reason. I stress here of all the developed countries in the world, not developing, Canada is the country that depends the most on its natural resources, in other words on its environment, to earn its way. That is of all the developed countries. We can easily understand why.

Think of what our economy is made of. What is it? It is the forestry sector with pulp and paper and softwood lumber. The mining industry was in town today lobbying on some of its concerns. The mining industry is very prominent in this country. Of course fishing on both coasts, even in the north, is very important. Think of the time and energy that we put into those issues, as my own caucus has put into fishing issues in this country. Then we can go on with energy, whether it is hydroelectric energy or hydrocarbons, and of course agriculture. The list goes on and on.

Let me repeat, of all the developed countries in the world Canada is the country that depends the most on its environment to earn its way. We live off our environment.

For us, this issue is not just one of trying to determine whether we want a pristine landscape or the Rockies or whether we enjoy the sight of the ocean. Actually our livelihood depends on how we

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will manage this environment and there is actually more to it than that, the future of our own children. Their standard of living will depend on how we manage this environment today. For that reason alone this is an extremely important issue for Canada. I would venture to say that this issue, all things being relative, is more important to Canada, whether it is global warming or other environment issues, than to any other developed country in the world that I know of.

There is another twist to this. If it is true we have this big land mass, that we depend on our environment to earn our way, let me add this other element that will really bring home how important environment issues are going to be for Canada.

We are also now one of the countries in the world most dependent on trade. Because of the success of the 1988 free trade agreement, because of the success of NAFTA, because of the role we have played in furthering the interest in the WTO, Canada is, with Germany, the developed country that depends the most on trade to maintain its standard of living. I think it is probably close now to 40% of our gross domestic product.

By the way, for those who may be surprised by that statistic, maybe we need to remind them that how could it be otherwise. How could we otherwise explain that a country of 30 million people only, if we put it in the context of the G-7, could have such a high standard of living if it were not for the fact that we sell abroad? Trade for us is important, so important that the jobs that have been created in Canada in the last few years have been created because of an increase in trade, in particular, trade with the United States since the signing of the 1988 free trade agreement. Had it not been for the trade agreement and the jobs that ensued in the last few years Canada would have been in a recession and we would not have had any jobs created. That is how significant it is.

Let me finally try to tie this together. Our land mass is very vulnerable. We live off our environment. We are dependent on trade. This also means that of all the countries in the world on this issue we are very vulnerable.

● (2035)

If ever there were to be a movement for green protectionism in the world, and there are signs of that, of sanctions leveraged against countries that are not perceived as respecting environmental standards, Canada would suffer, immediately and immeasurably.

I will speak to some of the comments of our colleague, the leader of the Reform Party, who based all his arguments on science. In all honesty and sincerity I would have to add this to the colleagues of the Reform Party. They would be wise to pay attention to the fact that in the international marketplace science may not have a lot to do with decisions taken by certain countries that perceive Canada

as not living up to environmental standards. If they come to the conclusion, right or wrong, that we are not respecting environmental standards and they decide to act against us, we will be in big trouble.

Do not take my word for it. Ask those in the pulp and paper industry. Ask those companies that try to sell paper abroad what they went through in the early 1990s. I will forever remember as minister of environment the industry's asking me to bring in tougher environmental regulations which cost the industry between \$3 billion and \$5 billion in adjustment. This was at a low time in the cycle while it was coming out of a recession. Why was it asking for the regulations? It was getting hammered in the marketplace by its European competitors that were accusing it of not living up to the environmental standards that they were supposedly imposing on themselves.

Let us be under no illusion here. It is great to talk about the science, which I do want to talk about, but there is more to it than that. Let us look at this issue in terms of our self-interest as Canadians. We need to understand that we have an opportunity for some enlightened self-interest. The enlightened self-interest of Canada is to be ahead of the game in the area of the environment. We should be ahead of the game whether in terms of sustainable development, the pulp and paper industry or global warming, energy or sulphur dioxide emissions.

If we are not ahead of the game, if we are not doing as well or better than the highest standards of our competitors in this area, we are vulnerable to sanctions and we will be the first to suffer. We will suffer environmentally, from a standard of living perspective and also from an economic perspective. That is the bottom line.

I have some good news for those listening who may be scared of these issues. As many Canadians, they may see these issues as insurmountable problems. There is reason to feel that way at the outset. When we are confronted with this problem of global warming it is complicated and technically difficult to understand. We hear of scenarios of countries being gobbled up by the sea with rising sea levels, terrible catastrophes if we do not deal with the problem. The same is true for a number of environmental issues.

I want to share this good news with those Canadians listening tonight. When we were confronted with similar problems, when we faced them head on based on good science, good common sense, strong political will and clear leadership, we were able to make real progress in dealing with some equally difficult issues.

I would like to say it was only under Progressive Conservative governments but I cannot, although I am very proud of the role we played. I am extremely proud of the role former prime minister Brian Mulroney played on the world stage. He was known and he

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has a clear record as one Canadian prime minister who made this one of his top issues.

I have other examples of success stories for everyone in the area of the environment. One of them is the Montreal protocol of 1987. If memory serves me correctly, the member for Lac-Saint-Louis attended that conference as minister of environment for the province of Quebec in 1987. He is saying yes, and that may explain why it was partially successful.

In 1987 we were faced with the issue of ozone depletion. Let me point out to the leader of the Reform Party who went on ad nauseam about science that what he said tonight about science are things we heard only a few years ago about ozone depleting substances.

● (2040)

As far back as 1985 we heard exactly the same thing coming from the naysayers who denied that there was any problem at all. Now we are stuck. Future generations of Canadians are stuck with a problem that is still going to be around in 50 years from now. Why? Because there are a number of people who did not want to admit that there was a problem until they had the absolute, total truth.

Hon. Charles Caccia: The smoking gun.

Hon. Jean J. Charest: The smoking gun, the member for Davenport says as an example. I remember that. They wanted the smoking gun. They discovered the smoking gun in 1985 and now there is a number of people who think it was too late.

Nonetheless, the Montreal protocol was signed and there are very real examples of progress to follow with regard to what it has been able to accomplish.

First of all, one of the things done in the Montreal protocol was the recognition for the first time that developing countries and developed countries needed to be treated differently. There was a very lucid view brought to the signing of that agreement in 1987 to the effect that if we imposed on developing countries the same standards we were going to ask of developed countries, they would never live up to them, it would never happen; that it was wiser and better to actually impose and ask them to adopt a different schedule that was slower, but at least allow them to meet the targets. That is what was done, and done successfully.

The second thing I remember about the Montreal protocol that was successful was the commitment to develop substitutes to ozone depleting substances like CFCs, thus the development in Canada in particular of HCFCs which, by the way, let us be very clear, are not pollution free products. In fact, there are no pollution free products.

They do not exist. But they were a substitute that was a lot less damaging than CFCs. Real progress was marked and we were able to move from there.

From the Montreal protocol on, we were able to make some real progress and today this is an issue that I think is well understood. The science is well established. It happened maybe a little too late. It did happen too late, actually, for people who continued to be the naysayers, but here is an example where Canada, I am proud to say, played a very real role in bringing about an environmental agreement that worked.

The same is true in the second example about sulphur dioxide emissions. Do you remember, Mr. Speaker, with all due respect, what sulphur dioxide emissions are about? I know the member for Davenport and also the member for Lac-Saint-Louis know what I am talking about. I am talking about acid rain.

Acid rain was probably the number one issue, one of the number one irritants between Canada and the United States in the 1980s. It was one of the top issues between the previous Conservative government and the Government of the United States from 1984 to 1990. I remember what was said in industry, much as the leader of the Reform Party said tonight, when confronted with the importance of our cleaning up our own house first.

Those who were there will remember that Canada could only make a case to its southern neighbour if it started by cleaning up its own act. So we had to make a commitment to reduce sulphur dioxide emissions at home, which we did in the signing of an agreement, if I remember correctly either in 1986 or 1987, committing us to reduce sulphur dioxide emissions by 20%. Low and behold, if we went back and saw the record and the reaction of industry at the time, which I am sure was sincere, it said it could not be done, that this would kill jobs, that it would kill the economy. Guess what. It had exactly the reverse effect.

Again I want to be cautious. My memory may not be exactly correct on this, but it was Inco in the region of Val D'Or in northern Quebec. Through this commitment it was forced, coerced, into reviewing its production processes and by doing that not only did it reduce sulphur dioxide emissions, but it was able to reduce the cost of producing its product. That is one of the consequences, one of the very positive consequences that emerged from that initiative. Yet it was not described as that from the beginning.

In fact, what we heard was very similar to what the leader of the Reform Party said tonight, the sky is falling, from the reverse side of the coin. There is a real example.

Then we went on from there to sign an agreement, the clean air agreement of 1990, with the American government.

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• (2045)

The problem of acid rain is not solved, far from it. We should debate that another day because there are issues on the horizon with regard to that agreement. We certainly met our objective at the time. We made progress since then. We were proud of what we were able to accomplish.

I hope this language is not unparliamentary but it needs to be said because much like the leader of the Reform Party tonight, the American president at the time, Mr. Reagan, also said there was no acid rain problem. Some members may remember because it was reported—I do not know whether it was true—that apparently the American president, Mr. Reagan, said that acid rain was caused by “duck shit”.

The Minister of Natural Resources has said that though it may not be the best parliamentary language, he can live with it. Being at the cabinet table I will take his word for it.

Does that not remind us of how some political leaders can get embroiled in their own rhetoric and ignore the science or the basics? Yet we had to persevere. Yes, we did and we were able to come to an agreement.

I want to speak on the science aspect. Let me be very clear that I am not a scientist. In fact, when I was minister of the environment it was one of the most challenging areas for me to deal with. Believe me, ministers who have been there know how tough a department it is. It is a department that is on the cutting edge of science, of law and of public administration. It is very challenging.

We are lucky in Canada because we have within the Department of the Environment some of the best scientists in the world. We certainly have the best public servants in the world.

I will take a second to attest tonight that when we were in Rio, Canada's delegation was the best served delegation in the world with regard to its public servants. Whether it was the Department of Foreign Affairs, CIDA, natural resources, energy at the time or the Department of the Environment, they represented the absolute best, no question asked, of public servants in the world. It is still true today.

When as a layman in the department I had to rely on them for science, I found them to be rigorous and honest in their assessment. I also found it was very useful for me to have no knowledge of science, because by the time they explained it to me and I could figure it out I could explain it to anyone else. That was a real advantage for me.

On science, just to reassure Canadians, there is no one who takes it lightly. We have in excess of 150 countries involved in the agreement signed in Rio. Does anyone think for a second that all these countries got involved in it, not caring what the consequences would be and what it would lead to? Of course not. I do not take it for granted that they were all right because they were all there, but I

can report how the science was developed. Again Canada was intimately involved.

There was a conference here in 1988 on the changing atmosphere in Canada. From that conference emerged the commitment to put together an international panel on climate change, known as the IPCC, which then produced a report and followed it up with others. The latest was in 1996 at the Geneva conference that resulted in the declaration calling for commitments to control emissions in a post-2000 era to be legally binding.

The conference also endorsed the IPCC climate change 1995 report which concluded that the balance of evidence—and the words here are carefully chosen—marks a “discernible human influence on the global climate”, which has a destabilizing impact on the globe's ecosystem.

There is no one who ever pretended for a single second that the science in this regard was ironclad and absolute. Rarely is the science on anything ironclad and absolute. To pretend or imply that is the case is to deliberately mislead. That should never be allowed to happen.

Beyond that, I can certainly reassure Canadians we are working on very solid science that has been verified. I hear members of the Reform Party laughing.

• (2050)

Mr. Lee Morrison: What do you know about science, Jean?

Hon. Jean J. Charest: The member asks what I know about science. I wonder what he knows about science. I know what international science knows. That is why the international panel was put together.

The leader of the Reform Party tonight only reminded me of the other scientists we heard from recently who are still arguing that cigarette smoke is good for your health.

We could use exactly the same line, because there will always be a scientist somewhere who will say that smoking does not harm your health at all. They are out there. If he wants to line up with them as a member of the flat earth society, fine, but it speaks to those who continue to dwell in this paranoia.

I assure Canadians that with regard to the science this is a very solid case.

[*Translation*]

I would like to take a few minutes to discuss the process that has failed and that preceded this conference on climate changes in Kyoto. This in my opinion is where we find the greatest difference in approach between the current government and the Rio conference.

The minister is well aware, she is present this evening, she was also in Rio at the earth summit, as was the current Minister of Finance. What I want to point out this evening is that in the months and years prior to the earth summit in Rio, the government of the

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day made a commitment to involve the main actors, the principal decision makers in the delegation.

We did something fairly rare, we involved the provincial governments, environmental groups and the business community from the outset. We opened wide the doors to permit access to all government officials. We even involved municipal governments. The minister will recall that the mayor of Montreal attended the earth summit in Rio along with other big city mayors.

With this approach we wanted to reflect the very nature of our federation in the decisions made in Rio. There were four essential elements. There was what was termed Agenda 21, which was the basic document, the overall framework, making commitments on a number of subjects. There was also a proposal for a convention on climate changes, the topic this evening.

There was a second convention proposed on protecting biodiversity. The fourth document discussed at Rio was an agreement on forest management, which we wanted to see made into a convention, but there were objections by the developing countries when it came down to doing so.

In order to ensure that Canada could exercise its full authority at Rio and use its influence to the maximum, we acknowledged right from the very start the importance of involving all stakeholders. This was a wise decision for us, and I am very proud of that decision because it is an example of how Canadian federalism must operate.

So much so, that we also decided, within that context, to have an open delegation, which is to say that ordinary citizens had access to public servants. They could influence decisions, whether the department was Natural Resources, Energy, or Environment. As well, these people were directly accountable to them.

Every morning at Rio, there was a meeting of the Canadian delegation. Some mornings we were close to 200 people, with everyone taking part and being informed of the decisions of the day and the way we would be proceeding. For us, and for Canada, this was an extraordinary experience.

When we are told—and I take this opportunity to clarify this—when somebody tells us that we made commitments at Rio and did not know what we were doing, that is false. The attitude of all countries in attendance at Rio in making commitments was “We don’t know exactly how we will stabilize levels, but we are committed to taking precise steps in order to reach an assessment of the actions to be taken”.

• (2055)

But to claim that in Rio we deliberately signed an agreement not knowing what we were doing, or misleading people into thinking

we were going to do something when we did not know what, is false. It is completely false to make this kind of insinuation. The members who were there know that it was a very open process.

In his speech a few minutes ago the leader of the Bloc Québécois illustrated just how open it was when he told us that only two governments in Canada ratified the agreement on climatic change. In fact, it was three governments, because the government of which I was a member ratified it. We were the first government in the world, among those who signed the Rio agreement, to do so. This Parliament was the first Parliament to ratify it.

We were followed by the Government of British Columbia and the Government of Quebec. The Bloc Québécois leader himself pointed this out. I am sorry to turn his argument against him and I do not do so out of malice, but let us admit that it is hard to resist reminding Bloc members that this is one of the very successes of our federalism. Here we have the proof, and he himself admitted that the approach we took in Rio made it possible for the Government of Quebec to participate fully in the decision, actually formally ratifying the treaty on climatic change.

Now they remind us that only Quebec and British Columbia did so. Surely there must be provincial governments in Canada that are less federalist than Quebec is now. This, for us, is a demonstration of what federalism can be when this kind of issue is tackled the way it must be tackled.

I am sorry today to have to say the opposite. For some reason I do not understand, and I really do not understand, I wonder why the provincial governments were not involved from the start. I do not know why. They should have been though. The same applies to the private sector and environmental groups. However, that is not what we feel. In any case, if we are to believe the reaction of the people involved, this should not be the case. I do not know about the environmental groups. But the provincial governments were not involved from the start.

I can only conclude this evening that, basically, the Liberals have reverted quickly to their usual style. They do not tend to involve the provinces. It does not come naturally to them. This is why we find ourselves in the rather awkward situation of having a federal-provincial conference a few days before the conference, with the Minister of the Environment and the Minister of Natural Resources in attendance. I acknowledge their good faith, but we have to admit they got no help from their cabinet colleagues. My sympathy. It must be tough in cabinet. I can see them around the table. They raise their hands, and the Prime Minister gives them each a turn. The Minister of the Environment probably said “Mr. Prime Minister, Kyoto is coming up”. And the Prime Minister replied “Next item on the agenda. We will get to it”.

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I am exaggerating a bit, but this cannot be far from reality. Otherwise, how do we explain that we are on the eve of an international conference with monumental consequences for Canada and we are so ill prepared. It is a disaster.

And this is disastrous, not only disastrous politically, but also because it raises the following question: how are we going to implement the decisions taken at Kyoto, if the provincial governments are not fully involved in the debate?

Even if the federal government were to come back to Canada with a commitment to a 20% reduction within ten years, if no provincial government is involved, nothing will happen, period.

This is very serious. This government must, unfortunately, be told that the fault lies, in this connection at least, with the fact that there is a lot of catching up to do if we are to prove to Canadians that they are capable of making this federation move in the direction of real progress, so that an issue like climatic change can be successful.

[*English*]

As we now look ahead to this conference and its results, it is very difficult for other parties in the House of Commons, given the lack of preparation, to give a commitment, to give a good sense of what Canada's commitment should be. I am being very honest tonight as we try to assess ourselves. We have been as honest and forthright as we can in trying to estimate what Canada's position should be.

• (2100)

Given the lack of work done around this, it is going to be very difficult for anyone to put forward a position. I thought the leader of the NDP was quite courageous tonight. She expressed the view that her party would support a 20% reduction in 1990 levels by the year 2005. That is very ambitious. I would beg to disagree with the leader of the NDP on that. I would think given the circumstances and what we know, that is beyond what is reasonable.

The leader of the Reform Party has shied away. He is still arguing that there is a world plot against Canada. The skies probably let them figure that out, a world plot working against us. Apart from that fact, he would probably defend that cigarette smoking is good for your health.

He also says that the government cannot make the difference between good and bad science. One of the arguments he gave for that is that apparently there are very few science stories in the clipping service of the government. Now there is a good scientific measurement. There is a real test of absolute rigour. I hope no one from any other country is listening. This is embarrassing.

I have to congratulate him on developing the Meech Lake effect because the Meech Lake effect extends all the way into the Reform caucus. Everyone will remember Meech Lake.

The leader of the Reform Party has made a career of arguing against the distinct society clause but he may not have picked this up. The government has said a few times that the unique character clause means exactly the same thing as the distinct society clause and now he is in favour of the unique character clause. I guess that is new science also.

I guess we will leave him alone with the grand plot to unthrow the world.

I want to add in regard to the position that we in this party, in this caucus, will support the position that Canada should strive to stabilize its 1990 greenhouse gas emissions by the year 2010 as was agreed to by the provincial governments, except for one provincial government, that of Quebec. That is the position this government will bring into this conference.

We view this as being an interim position or a position that we take going into the conference that will be susceptible to change as Canada emerges from the Kyoto conference hopefully better enlightened about what the world community is ready to do and committed to develop a real action plan and not allow this issue again to go back to, not to put a pun on it, the back burner of the cabinet.

Among the things we would like to see this government speak to very clearly in regard to Canada's position are these few. First of all, much as we did in the case of sulphur dioxide emissions, which is a success story, that proves this can be done. We need to recognize that in Canada there has to be regional variances. The economy of Alberta is not the same as the economy of the province of Quebec. We have to recognize these differences to allow each region of Canada to carry its fair share of the load.

For example, the Canadian petroleum producers make the argument that part of the greenhouse gas emissions they produce, a good part of the increase is due to exports they send to the United States. I think they make a very good case to the effect that the increase in economic activity happening in another country has had an effect on greenhouse gas emissions in Canada. In all fairness it should be recognized that they in that respect carry a heavier burden than other regions of Canada vis-à-vis the United States and there has to be some recognition of that.

That is the first principle we would like to see the government adopt as it goes to this conference and emerges with a position.

The second one has to do with joint implementation. Here Canada should really lead the way. Canada takes great pride in the role it plays in developing countries. Here is a real opportunity for us to recognize that if we wanted to have the biggest bang for our

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buck in dealing with greenhouse gas emissions, if we wanted to have the most effect at the most rapid rate, we would certainly put the bulk of our resources in helping developing countries acquire basic technologies. We do not have to get the last version of the best high technology in the world, but basic technologies to help them diminish greenhouse gas emissions.

● (2105)

By doing this we would help the cause in a way that would be measurable quite rapidly. We would also help developing countries have a better environment within their own land mass and ecosystems. We would also help them have more productive means of producing energy. It makes sense all around. It makes sense for us. It makes sense for them. This should be an issue on which Canada should lead in Kyoto on joint implementation.

I hope the minister will do that, that cabinet will press that and that the government will do it. We will certainly back them up on this so that we can receive credits for the efforts that we were able to allow. Again this will allow Canada to continue to play a lead role in the world in promoting these technologies elsewhere.

The third principle should be some flexibility also in the commitments we make. This is a little more complicated and it is new. What we should strive for if we want an honest and lucid agreement is an agreement emerging from Kyoto that would allow some countries to have a different target and to vary that target given their own realities.

Canada in this respect is a very solid example. Our land mass, our climate, the distances. There are obvious reasons why we would produce more energy per capita than other countries in the world. Given this reality, given the efforts that we are ready to put into this issue, there are good solid reasons why we could also have recognition of some differences and some variation in the commitments that different countries make.

The fourth principle is one I and my party are very interested in and which carries a great deal of potential. That is the use of economic instruments. Here we have to be clear. Economic instruments in the area of the environment embrace a broad range of tools, including carbon taxes to which we are opposed. We are opposed to the use of carbon taxes. Let me take a second to explain why.

We already use energy in our country for the purposes of taxation. We hear our American neighbours talk about carbon taxes and they compare them to Canada and forget one essential element. In the southern part of the United States and in most parts of the United States the gasoline at the pump is not used as a source of taxation. In Canada it is. In this respect we could argue that we

already have a carbon tax. Going that route from our perspective is certainly not the best idea.

But there are many other instruments available to us, including tradable permits. This is something rather difficult to understand for the public. It was developed around the acid rain agreement on sulphur dioxide emissions. Our American neighbours are using it. I have heard that for the first time in the last few months these permits are actually being traded and profits are being made. This seems to demonstrate at the outset that they will work. I say seem to because it is very early in the area of tradable permits to determine whether they absolutely work, but they seem to carry a great deal of promise for reasons I believe in.

If we are able to offer real economic incentives to deal with this issue, we will get results. We live in a market based economy. A market based economy works if it is directed toward incentives that allow and encourage people to be more efficient with the environment and with their greenhouse gas emissions.

Tradable permits could very well and should be part of the initiatives that Canada embraces. The American president in the statement on the American position has alluded to the fact that they are interested in such a system on a world basis. We could certainly interpret from that that if he is interested in a tradable permit system on a world basis, geography being what it is, we happen to be neighbours and it would involve us. Certainly any initiative that goes beyond the United States will have a continental impact and we would be natural partners in implementing such a system.

I encourage the minister to do that. I encourage both ministers. But I encourage you to start doing the homework because the government failed in doing its homework around this. You failed in doing the homework around this, Mr. Speaker. Not you personally, Mr. Speaker. I know you have been nodding incessantly since I have been talking, positively, and I thank you for that. Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Natural Resources should not assume that any movement of your head has the same significance for him as it would have for me.

● (2110)

I want to say to the government that on this issue it has certainly failed any reasonable test of following up on work that had been left behind. There was a commitment that the environment and finance departments would produce a working paper on this. The paper that was produced was quite weak. The introduction described the paper in very clear language, that the mandate was very narrow, and the work was quite weak.

The government should be encouraged since others have taken up the cause. The environmental commission in Montreal which was struck as a result of NAFTA has done some excellent work in this area. That commission would be able to help all countries,

especially the three NAFTA countries, to develop a tradable permit system.

Fifth, the government should get some recognition for the management of our carbon sink. For those who are unfamiliar with a carbon sink, it is an ecosystem that is able to absorb carbon dioxide, our forests being an example.

The best known carbon sink in the world is the Amazon forest, which we would feel very strongly about because we do not live in the Amazon. There are people all over the world who would be very shocked at the idea that the Amazon forest would be cut down. This would naturally preoccupy us since the Amazon represents the most important carbon sink in the world, although the oceans are also carbon sinks. Carbon sinks absorb carbon dioxide.

Canada's land mass contains 10% of the world's forests. We have a responsibility in the management of our forests in terms of softwood lumber and other issues today and tomorrow for our children's sake, and for those who work in the industry. Canada has come a long way in the last few years in the way it manages its forests. There is a lot of enlightened self-interest involved here also. Although I understand it will be difficult for us to get recognition for that, we should get some recognition for the carbon sinks.

Others have spoken about measures to get more economy out of the use of energy. Efforts in that area will be spoken of. Our environment critic, the member for Fundy—Royal, will speak on this issue. He will detail some of the work we have done. As someone said earlier, in the end this is not a partisan issue and I agree. We wish the delegation well in Kyoto. We did well in Rio. We will do everything in our power to help advance this debate for the sake of doing what is right not only for our economy today but for future generations of Canadians.

Hon. Ralph E. Goodale (Minister of Natural Resources and Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to take part in this special debate on climate change. I am glad to have an opportunity to say a few words and to hear what other members of the House have to say as well. I hope our overall discussion this evening will be useful, constructive and realistic.

This debate is really another step among many, another phase in the ongoing public dialogue on the issue of climate change in which many Canadians have been thoughtfully engaged for a long time. Scientists, environmental experts, non-governmental organizations, think tanks, business leaders, industrial organizations, municipalities, federal, provincial and territorial officials, government ministers at all levels, individual citizens and consumers have all been advancing ideas and debating possible solutions. Our government has been participating throughout.

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Many different and sometimes conflicting points of view have been put forward but despite the intensity of feelings on various sides, for the most part all of those participating in the public debate have tried to be reasoned and helpful. I hope that spirit can prevail in this House as well.

• (2115)

We do not need histrionics and hyperbole. We do not need the verbal excesses and abuses which too often prevail in Parliament. What we do need is careful thought, common sense, a sense of common purpose and the will to pull together in a real and serious way to address what most of the world has identified as a genuine problem demanding an effective global solution.

The climate change challenge is especially perplexing for Canada because of some of the unique and, ironically, some of the most desirable features of our country, features like the sheer size of our land mass, the long distances and the tough topography over which we must transport our people and goods, the extremes of our weather conditions from 40° below to more than 40° above, our resource based, energy intensive and export oriented economy, an economy which is growing faster than the rest of the industrialized world, our record setting exports and our growth in population, the second highest growth rate among all developed countries.

Each of these Canadian characteristics contributes more to our national total of greenhouse gas emissions which in turn contributes to that discernible negative impact upon the climate which can be attributed to human conduct.

In coming to grips with greenhouse gases and climate change, we in Canada have a difficult circle to square but that does not mean that we can ignore or deny the problem. We cannot shrink from the challenge or shirk the responsibility.

I heard the Leader of the Opposition tonight spend a good deal of his time condemning the national and international science upon which the concern about global warming is based. The only logical extension of his reasoning is that Canada should go to Kyoto to prevent any agreement from being reached or, if one is reached, Canada according to him should opt out.

He may or may not agree with the science, but does he seriously contend that Canada can simply stand aside? Ours is a more open society, a more open economy than most others in the world. We are more dependent upon world trade and global economics than almost any other industrialized country. Forty per cent of our gross domestic product is derived from exports. Eighty per cent of our trade is with the United States.

There is global momentum toward an outcome in Kyoto, an agreement including the United States. In the face of that thrust, Mr. Speaker, with the greatest of respect, we do not have the luxury of simply holding up our hand and hollering "whoa". We cannot

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say "Stop the world, I want to get off". What we need to do is to try our best to be constructively influential, to achieve the best possible result in Kyoto in concert with the rest of the world, a result that works for Canada and one that works for the globe.

I am very pleased that the provinces and territories have adopted a constructive attitude in common cause to achieve that kind of outcome. They have been very much involved with the Government of Canada in consultations over the last many months, not the least of which was the joint meeting of federal, provincial and territorial energy and environment ministers in Regina last month.

The provinces and territories have acknowledged that Canada needs to be part of a realistic global agreement on climate change. They have agreed that based upon the current understanding of Canadian circumstances and the current understanding of the state of international negotiations, it is reasonable to seek to reduce aggregate greenhouse gas emissions in Canada back to 1990 levels by approximately the year 2010.

The provinces and territories also agreed that it is desirable to do better than that if at all possible. They have emphasized the need for flexibility, flexibility to take into account the inevitable give and take, the ebb and flow that is inherent in international negotiations and flexibility in terms of implementation techniques and methodologies.

• (2120)

The provinces and territories also agreed on a collaborative and inclusive approach on implementation. We need to make a solid, comprehensive team Canada effort. We must all strive to be part of the solution. We must all work very closely together as partners. That is the provincial attitude overall and it is helpful.

A great many in the private sector, in business and industry have also worked very hard to be helpful and constructive. They have not buried their heads in the sand. They have not tried to deny reality. They have offered useful ideas and advice and they have started to take concrete actions within their own sectors, organizations and companies to reduce emission levels and move forward.

The private sector, the provinces and territories, a broad range of other stakeholders, indeed all Canadians have been invited to work closely with us to build together a sound and sensible implementation plan for the Kyoto agreement.

The Prime Minister has repeatedly reaffirmed that we are not interested in a carbon tax. We are not interested in seeing any province or region or sector bearing a disproportionate burden. However, we are keenly interested in greater energy efficiency for vehicles, homes, buildings and industrial processes. We are

interested in the greater and more cost effective applications of renewable and alternative energy sources.

Just this week a groundbreaking agreement between Petro-Canada and Iogen Corporation will help us to move in that direction.

We are interested in the implementation of co-generation projects and their integration into power grids. We are interested in the very substantial acceleration of science and technology, commercialization and transfer, projects like the Ballard fuel cell, for example.

We are interested in the use of joint implementation schemes with other nations. We are interested in the creation of credits and the trading of credits to recognize our relatively cleaner and lower carbon exports and our advanced technology. We are interested in the broadening, deepening and strengthening of the self-initiated measures launched and pursued by business and industry.

These and perhaps other measures are likely to be part of the overall package. Through extensive and exhaustive consultations, both within Canada and abroad, we have built a platform for the kind of meaningful partnerships that we will need in spades after Kyoto to deliver on our commitments. We have positioned our country to build bridges of consensus internationally to facilitate an agreement when the end game of the global negotiations beings in earnest about 10 days from now.

We want a deal that works. We want a deal that makes sense both environmentally and economically. We want a deal that transforms problems and challenges into opportunities for jobs and growth, for technological sophistication and for trade. We want a deal that is right for Canada and a deal that is right for the world.

It is with that conviction and determination that we go to Kyoto a week from now to make a real difference for Canada and the world.

Ms. Jean Augustine (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I listened very carefully to the minister and would like to draw his attention to a program in 3,000 Toronto households. That program is called Green Saver. It shows people how to improve home comfort, save on bills and reduce household energy consumption. The green saver program works with clients and shows some improvement in terms of their individual homes. It shows the impact on climate change and emissions. They have documented the progress that individuals have been able to make.

I want to ask the minister if individuals and communities with some assistance, acting on their own, can reduce greenhouse emissions, what is the federal government taking into the international forum to show how the federal government itself has been putting its house in order? In other words, how can we show some

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of the efficiencies that we have done in our federal buildings and what can we take to that forum for discussion?

• (2125)

Hon. Ralph E. Goodale: Mr. Speaker, on the basic questions of can Canadians as individuals make a difference, I think the answer to that is profoundly, yes. Indeed, when we hear some of the debate we may get the impression that the big enemy or the bad culprit is the upstream oil and gas industry in the country. In fact, on the production side with respect to oil and gas, that sector would account for roughly 15% or 16% of emissions overall.

The largest part of the challenge here is not on the production side of the equation, it is on the use and the application side of the equation. It is obviously necessary, important and possible for all players, whether they are in business or industry or in their own private residences, in community groups and organizations to participate and to make a very large difference.

The hon. member referred to one very useful example. There are literally thousands of examples across the country where Canadians as individuals may be well ahead of their political process in grappling with the issue and developing innovative ideas that can truly make a contribution.

I think it is important for us, as we have already begun to do, to make a complete inventory of all of those initiatives, to determine to what extent those initiatives can move forward and be successful on their own foundation without any kind of stimulation or encouragement and where, in the appropriate circumstances, would there need to be some kind of incentive that might come through the government sector or through a collaborative effort among organizations in the private sector.

I think we will need a mix of instruments, some of them voluntary, some brought about by incentives and other forms of encouragement so that all Canadians can be actively engaged in building solutions. I think those individuals to whom the member just referred who are already active in this field in the city of Toronto deserve a great deal of praise and commendation.

In appropriate circumstances, yes, I believe there is a role for government incentives to encourage further and greater progress in that direction.

Mr. Lee Morrison (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the minister stated very properly that we should try not to be too partisan when discussing this issue.

I wonder what he thinks of the stridently anti-intellectual comments of the leader of the fifth party when he was ridiculing other people's take on science. I suspect the only physics that man ever took was Ex-lax.

Hon. Ralph E. Goodale: Mr. Speaker, I am not sure that I should comment on the biological theories of either party in the opposition. I think they are perfectly capable of demonstrating their abilities in one way or the other in that regard.

However, partisanship aside, the only point I would like to make is that this issue is real and it is serious. It demands real and serious attention. I hope that all members of the House, members of the other place and all Canadians will address it in that spirit so that we can at Kyoto and beyond Kyoto arrive at results that are good for our country and good in terms of our responsibility in the global community.

Mr. Bill Gilmour (Nanaimo—Alberni, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I think the importance of this debate is being shown by the people who are addressing it tonight. Two ministers, the leaders of all the opposition parties, shows the significance of the debate to the House and to Canadians.

However, I have to ask why we are having this debate when we are 10 days away from Kyoto? This should have happened a year and a half ago.

• (2130)

The government is asking for comments and advice from Canadians and from the other parties. It is too late. It is 10 days from Kyoto, and we are still waiting for the government's position. This is not the way to go to an international event.

I would like to address some of the issues that have not been touched on so far. I suppose if we had to pick a date 1990 would be as good as any. I thought the minister was on the right line about a month ago when she said there had to be a formula to address Canada's particular conditions. She withdrew her comments within a day. Obviously some people in her caucus got to her.

Canada is a different country. It has a smaller population and wide expanse. It is a cold country. If we compare the Europeans we do not try to lump Scandinavia in with Spain. Yet, with Canada's expanse, we are trying to that. That is incorrect.

There needs to be a formula to address a country's unique perspective, whether it be Australia, Canada or whatever. It needs to be addressed so that 1990 can be picked as a date, wherever one is in the spectrum.

For example, Canada has done a pretty good job in many areas. Other countries, particularly the European bloc, are at the beginning. Why would we have one country up here on level of attainment compared to one below it? There needs to be a balancing. What I am suggesting is a level playing field.

That formula has not been addressed by the government. I do not believe it will be addressed at Kyoto. I think the President of the

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U.S. will address it because he wants to level the playing field. I think that is correct.

Another issue is that 35 of the 165-odd countries 35 will be asked to sign on. This is a global problem which requires a global solution. All the countries in the world going to the conference need to be part of the solution. We cannot have Canada, for example, signing on to a particular agreement when Mexico, China and India, which will be major contributors to greenhouse gases in the future, are not being asked to sign on the dotted line. Perhaps it should not be to the same degree as Canada but at least they should be asked to make a commitment. That commitment to my knowledge is not being asked for. There has to be some agreement that gets all of us into the arena together.

We keep hearing that Canada's problems are huge. We need to bring into perspective that Canada is responsible for 2% of global emissions compared with the U.S. at 25% and China at about 20%.

We often hear the minister and the government say that Canadians have been consulted, that the provinces have been consulted. The provinces were consulted in the last couple of months. To my knowledge there has not been a broad cross-Canada forum for Canadians to address the issue; for Canadians to say yes, they believe there is a problem or no, they do not; or for Canadians to say the degree they would like to address it and to indicate some solutions. Whatever the issues they should be bring them forward but a forum does not exist and did not exist.

We are going to Kyoto. The government will come back with the solution, ram it down our throats and say "This is it, Canada; like or leave it". That is backward. It is top down government instead from the bottom up. The consensus of the players, the Canadian people, the provinces and the industry should be taken to Kyoto.

There was not consultation other than the last month, and I have to question that. What happened two weeks ago in Regina? The Minister of Natural Resources just commented on what a good deal that was. However, to my knowledge only eight days later the Prime Minister was stating a different target. The year 2010 was arrived at by the provinces; 2010 was the year the Prime Minister quoted to Premier Tobin and Premier Klein.

• (2135)

Where is the commitment? If this was a consensus or commitment as a result of the provinces and the Government of Canada working together, it did not last for eight days. There is a huge credibility gap between the Prime Minister, who is taking the commitment to Kyoto, and the provinces that will have to implement it down the road.

Where is the economic analysis? We can take various scenarios. We can take the emissions down to 2005, 2007, 2010 or 2015 and work out the different scenarios. How do we get to them? How will

we get the standards whether they be fuel taxes or voluntary commitments? However we get there Canadians need to know the numbers. We have yet to see an economic analysis from the government of the different alternatives, the different costs and who will pay them.

The government has dropped the ball. It is going to Kyoto 10 days from now with a stance Canadians have yet to hear. That is not the way to do it.

Hopefully in the next couple of days we will hear it and we will be able to get on side. I fear that the government will sign on to something in Japan, bring it back to Canada, and be forced to push it down the throats of Canadians. I fear it will be a position we may not agree with. I hope this can be avoided in the future.

Hon. Charles Caccia (Davenport, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would ask the hon. member for Nanaimo—Alberni the following question.

Why has he not brought to the attention of his leader the statement made by the intergovernmental panel on climate change "Greenhouse gas concentrations have continued to increase and the balance of evidence suggests a discernible human influence on global climate?"

This statement was made by more than 2,000 experts worldwide, participating in the drafting and reviewing of the intergovernmental panel report on climate change. Why has the hon. member not brought this statement to the attention of his leader?

Mr. Bill Gilmour: Madam Speaker, I am delighted the hon. member for Davenport raised the panel on climate change made up of 2,500 renowned scientists.

If we were to listen to the government, we would get the impression that these 2,500 scientists were all using the same song sheet but they are not. There is a vast difference of opinion in the climate change report.

Some sentences were politically written in the front summary by analysts for Vice-President Gore which do not reflect the inside of the report. If we pick selective sentences from that summary, they can be exceedingly misleading.

Mr. John Herron (Fundy—Royal, PC): Madam Speaker, I have a couple of questions for my hon. colleague. I find a couple of points to be a bit confusing.

The hon. member said that this was a global problem which required a global solution. I do not understand. Some of his remarks, and definitely those of his leader, actually refuted science and questioned whether the science actually existed.

Why would they recognize on the one hand that the science is questionable and then on the other hand come forward and say it is a global problem?

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I find rather confusing. Reform is all over the map on this issue.

• (2140)

The hon. member was reported in the *Ottawa Citizen* of October 25, 1997 as saying that environmental taxes may be part of the equation if they are dedicated. I actually believe the Reform Party does not like taxes, but I do not understand why it would advocate taxing something that is not a problem.

Mr. Bill Gilmour: Mr. Speaker, I am surprised that we hear this from the Conservative Party. It was the leader of the Conservative Party who was in Rio and got us into this glue pot in the first place.

I suggest the member should hold on to the coattails of his leader because they are going nowhere. I also suggest they should listen to the Reform Party because the Reform Party is questioning the science.

This is one of the few times people should say "Let's all jump on the bandwagon". This is not the time to jump on the bandwagon. This is the time to question the science.

We did not question the science in the cod fishery. The member is from the east coast. He knows what happened to the cod fishery. The science that we were promised was okay in the late seventies, was okay in the early eighties and was okay in the mid-eighties. We saw some decimation of the cod fishery because the scientists were not allowed to put forward straight science. It was political science, and that is what we are listening to here.

Hon. Charles Caccia (Davenport, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to briefly make a few comments on speeches that have been made so far. I congratulate the Minister of the Environment for her thoughtful intervention, for her emphasizing the importance of harnessing innovation, and for bringing to the attention of members of the House the situation in the Mackenzie basin.

The Minister of Natural Resources made an intervention indicating to us what is the composition of the package that Canada will bring to Kyoto. Evidently, when it comes to dealing with distant deadlines, it is quite understandable that governments would want to make their position known when it is very close to the deadline of the event. Therefore it is not a question of Canada going empty handed to Kyoto. It is just doing its homework very thoroughly. The speech of the Minister of Natural Resources is an indication that the package will be a thoughtful and fairly comprehensive one.

For 45 minutes we were treated to the unique review of the issue by the Leader of the Official Opposition. It was unique for its sequence of asinine statements, the like of which we have not heard in the House for a long time. He trotted out all the clichés that have been heard over the last 10 years on the issue. Having mentioned a couple of U.S. scientists who have doubts about the question of

whether or not there is a climate change in place or in action evolving on the face of the planet, he concluded that actually we had to be sceptical, that we could not accept the science.

As I just indicated to the Member for Nanaimo—Alberni, some 2,500 scientists, worldwide experts, participated in drafting and reviewing the second report of the intergovernmental panel on climate change of December 1995. Their conclusion in two lines is simply that the greenhouse gas concentrations have continued to increase and the balance of evidence suggests a discernible human influence on global climate.

To prove that the Leader of the Official Opposition did not do his homework properly, he made the capital mistake of quoting a witness who appeared before the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development, Dr. Allyn Clarke, and did not quote his conclusion. He chose to quote the opening remarks but failed to tell the House that the very same person concluded on that occasion that climate change must be taken seriously.

• (2145)

Not only that, but he also asked the committee to pay attention to the work done by oceanographers and sought support for their work.

Evidently the basis of information and research on the part of the people who are advising the leader of the Reform Party is very thin, if not very shaky.

When he ran out of arguments about the question of the scientific validity of this issue, what did he do? He invoked the spectre of taxes, which is always done when arguments run out, when short of convincing themes. Then the flag of possible potential taxes is waved. This is totally absurd in this political debate tonight.

As the leader of the Progressive Conservative Party just said a few moments ago, we have plenty of carbon taxes already imposed on gasoline at the present time.

It is very difficult to deal with gladiators who are ignorant and we have too many in this House of Commons. Speakers after the leaders of the various parties have only 10 minutes to deal with uninformed, ignorant and distorted information as was done tonight, unfortunately, by the leader of the Reform Party, thus contributing really nothing to the substance, to the search for answers on this extremely complex issue that is engaging the minds of scientists, of politicians of course, of decision makers and of governments around the world. Enough said about the pathetic performance by the leader of the Reform Party. What a shame I must say.

This issue is posing to us a number of interesting conclusions. Let me put the first one. The conclusion that one inevitably comes to when analysing this issue is that here there is, in a very rare

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moment, a rather unique convergence of economic and environmental goals.

The economy can only benefit from energy efficiency. The economy can only benefit from energy innovation and the economy can only benefit from prolonging the life of the reserves we have in our country through more careful consumption now and in the near future.

This convergence is unique. It is good business to apply energy efficiency and innovation and it is also good environmental policy.

Second, this issue offers us a unique opportunity to switch, gradually of course, from the use of oil to the use of natural gas with which we are abundantly endowed and which is an ideal fuel for its high calorific value because it is also clean. It is efficient in use and available in large quantities, particularly in our western provinces.

Third, this issue is indicating the urgent need for us to examine tax expenditures, fiscal and taxation measures, either direct or indirect, subsidies, you name it, which presently are offered to the petroleum, the oil sands and the coal industries.

We have to ask ourselves do these particular measures make sense when we are trying to move in a direction whereby we want to discourage, gradually, the use of these fossil fuels.

Fourth, this issue offers us a unique opportunity to examine and change our transport policies. Our transport policies are in urgent need of being redesigned because we have to link them to the aim of reducing greenhouse gases, to their reduction, wherever possible, particularly with respect to the potential offered in this country which is far from being achieved, namely public transit.

● (2150)

Fifth, this brings to our attention, in a frustrating manner actually, the issue which can be witnessed by anyone who watches landfill sites which are emitting greenhouse gases, the burning away of waste gases, mostly methane, instead of being utilized for district heating purposes, as it is done in many other jurisdictions, particularly the highly populated jurisdictions of Europe.

Sixth, this issue brings to our attention with crystal clear evidence the necessity of giving momentum to and paying much more attention to renewable sources of energy. They were recognized in the last two budgets but we are far from having given them the favourable tax treatment which is presently being given to the non-renewable sources of energy.

Then the unique model comes to our attention when we are looking for answers to this particular issue, the unique model offered by the Toronto Atmospheric Fund whereby the municipality has adopted a number of energy efficiency and innovation measures in the public and private sectors which have now made

Toronto the leader in this respect in the reduction of greenhouse gases.

To conclude, let me indicate that this issue also reminds us of the poverty issue in developing countries and of the necessity to improve, accelerate and strengthen the efforts of the developed countries in reducing poverty in order to come to grips with this very complex and far reaching issue.

Ms. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West—Nepean, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to comment on this debate and on one particular item which I hope the government will pay close attention to. It was the proposal put forward by the leader of the fifth party concerning tradable emission permits.

I remind him and the government that when one sets up a system of tradable permits of a limited stock, and as the leader of the fifth party says, they are starting to trade at a profit, the end result is they end up in fewer and fewer hands. Competition in the economy is therefore reduced and the ends are not necessarily achieved. Something which is a permit to pollute basically takes on a tremendously large value.

I ask the government, before it goes down that road, to consult with municipalities across this country that are desperately trying to get out of exactly that same system. That is precisely what has happened. Competition has disappeared. More and more of the resource has been concentrated in fewer and fewer hands and nobody benefits.

To the member for Davenport, he and I had the privilege during the 34th Parliament of working on a series of reports on our planet. They were all put together at the end of that Parliament by the committee in a compendium that I would recommend highly, particularly to the members of the official opposition.

I want to go back to some of the comments made in that report about the situation the globe faces. I want to quote from the president of the World Watch Institute: "On the environmental front the situation could hardly be worse. Every major indicator shows a deterioration in natural systems. Forests are shrinking, deserts are expanding and crop lands are losing top soil. The stratospheric ozone layer continues to thin. Greenhouse gases are accumulating. The number of plant and animal species is diminishing. Air pollution has reached health threatening levels in hundreds of cities and damage from acid rain can be seen on every continent".

Maurice Strong said: "If we continue our present course, life as we know it will not survive the 21st century. Indeed, our grandchildren, even in this blessed nation, will be experiencing a very severely deteriorated quality of life if we continue on our present course. The course we are on is like a cancer, headed for terminality. We simply cannot survive the pathway".

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I wonder if the member for Davenport would care to comment on whether he feels the situation on the globe has changed in the now nearly six years since our last report on global climate change was produced in that committee.

• (2155)

Hon. Charles Caccia: Madam Speaker, the short answer is yes. We have noticed in a variety of ways the deterioration of natural systems. That is the reason why we have at the present time a world commission on forest and sustainable development. That is why we have disputes in fisheries on the east coast and on the west coast. That is why there is the emerging issue of water in many populated countries. That is why we are engaged tonight in this issue which is part of an overall deterioration. This is why in the 1980s we had to deal with the question of the ozone layer and the damage to it which, as the leader of the Progressive Conservative Party said, has been one of the success stories so far.

There is deterioration and we cannot hide our heads in the sand, as the Reform Party seems to be inclined to do. We have to look at the issue and boldly make certain difficult decisions that have to do with the long term. Governments must make decisions relating to the long term. Evidently it is not an easy matter. This will be the test of openness and the farsightedness of this government in coming to grips with this, probably one of the most difficult long term issues.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Bernard Bigras (Rosemont, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like to start by asking for unanimous consent to divide my time into two five-minute speeches.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): Does the hon. member have the unanimous consent of the House to divide his speaking time with his colleague from Portneuf?

Some hon. members: Yes.

Mr. Bernard Bigras: Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to speak on this important subject of climatic change.

With only a few days left until Kyoto, it was high time for a debate in the House of Commons on this issue, which is of such vital importance for the quality of life of future generations. It is about this conference, which is vital to our future, that I want to speak to you today.

On Monday, Environment Canada released the troubling results of a study that took six years and cost over \$80 million. This study revealed that we must expect a higher mortality rate and an increase in the number of diseases if something is not done right away to slow down global warming.

This study also pointed out that certain species, whether vegetable or animal, will actually be threatened with extinction. According to the same source, the average temperature in Canada will increase by 3 to 6 degrees Celsius for the eastern and western

extremities of Canada, and by 4 to 6 degrees Celsius for the central part of the country.

The anticipated effects for Canada as a whole are disastrous. Scientists predict an increase in the frequency and intensity of storms, serious consequences for health, economic sectors, forestry, agriculture and fishing, and a significant impact on human health in general.

These serious phenomena are caused by the increase in greenhouse gas emissions. These gases prevent the sun's heat from returning into space and cause a gradual rise in temperatures. The large scale use of fossil fuels such as oil, coal and, to a lesser extent, natural gas produces these gases that cause the greenhouse effect responsible for global warming.

Next week, delegates from over 150 countries will begin 10 days of negotiations in Kyoto, Japan. Representatives of Canada and of Quebec will have to reach agreement with other nations at the conference on an international reduction objective. The Bloc Québécois was the first political party in Ottawa to take a clear stand on the need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

• (2200)

The Chrétien government has known since the Berlin conference, in 1995, that it would have to make a commitment at this conference, yet it did not take the necessary steps to prepare Canada for this important world summit.

Consequently, Canada is the only country among the seven most industrialized countries that has not made its position public in preparation for the negotiations. This is unacceptable, since Canada is the second largest producer of carbon dioxide per capita in the world after the U.S. In fact, we share this responsibility with all industrialized countries, which produce 80% of all greenhouse gases.

The Reform Party is waving the spectre of taxes hikes and fuel price increases to get us to do less than the U.S. Still facing a credibility problem, strangely enough, it is painting an even bleaker picture than the petroleum lobby in the United States with its statistics.

Such short-sighted vision does not serve the interests of anyone in Canada. What is at stake, in terms of our environment and our economy, is so important that it requires vigorous action on this issue. That is why the Bloc Québécois believes that the federal government must formally make strong greenhouse gas reduction commitments at the Kyoto conference scheduled for next week.

The federal government must acknowledge the fact that its current greenhouse gas reduction strategy has failed and act accordingly. Only by setting meaningful goals promoting a significant reduction of carbon dioxide emissions will the government confirm its willingness to address this serious problem. The provinces, particularly major polluters, must also pledge to do

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more in this area. The Canadian position must go further than the variable rate formula proposed by the Japanese. According to this formula, and given its size, population and climate, Canada should achieve reductions of 2.3% by the year 2010.

Obviously, this objective is far from that of the European Union, which we should try to reach, to the extent possible, but it does take the Canadian reality into account. This is the Bloc Québécois' position.

What will the Liberal government do, just days before the deadline? Cabinet ministers are very divided on the issue.

In conclusion, I will say once again that global warming is a major issue for my generation. Young Quebeckers want to live in a prosperous and environmentally responsible society, something to be achieved through sovereignty.

[English]

Ms. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West—Nepean, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I consulted with the other parties in the House and I think you would find consent from all sides to send the pages home if it has not already been done.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): Agreed. The hon. member for Durham, a quick question, please.

Mr. Alex Shepherd (Durham, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have a comment to which the member can respond. We touched several times on the topic of tradable credits tonight. The member for Sherbrooke mentioned that in his speech. He said that tradable credits are new and are just starting to be traded, even though they were traded as long ago as 1990 in the United States at a time when he was Minister of the Environment.

There is something missing from the equation in our business cycle, that is, the costs of polluting. Often we do not try to put a number on that. This is the problem with industrial structure. We do not have a cost of pollution. The notion of tradable credits allows us to recognize there is a cost to pollution which requires companies to buy these credits.

Some interesting things have happened recently in the United States. These credits are now traded on the Chicago Board of Trade. Environmental groups like Greenpeace are buying them. They are removing these credits which limits the ability of these companies to pollute. The object of the exercise is to give companies an incentive not to pollute by developing new technologies to reduce their emissions.

What does the member think about that kind of concept?

• (2205)

[Translation]

Mr. Bernard Bigras: Madam Speaker, as we have always said, the important thing is to invest in renewable technologies. This is what is important and what must be reflected in the Canadian position. We must have an energy policy that will allow us not only to reach our environmental goals, but also to maintain a degree of economic growth. I truly believe that this can be achieved.

Mr. Pierre de Savoye (Portneuf, BQ): Madam Speaker, we have a big problem. When I say we, I am not talking about the Ottawa area, Quebec City or Vancouver, but about the planet itself. We have a big problem because, since the onset of industrialization, we have been burning more of all sorts of things. We have been burning oil, wood, coal, and alcohol. We have been burning all sorts of things and this gives off carbon dioxide, a very simple gas but one with the incredible property of holding heat around the planet.

How can we trace 1,000 years of history with respect to carbon dioxide? We have only to look at ice samples trapped in glaciers for this period of time to see that historically the planet has had approximately—and here I am referring to a chart—280 parts per million of carbon dioxide. This keeps us very comfortable on our planet.

With industrialization, we have doubled the number of parts per million. This means that the planet is turning into a Thermos bottle and that the rays of sun that enter the atmosphere are not leaving at the same rate they used to. We are going to get fried if we are not careful.

Do we have much time left to take action? I would say we should have done something about twenty years ago to avoid the worst. Already we should be getting ready for important climate changes in 20, 30 or 40 years. We are perhaps already experiencing these climate changes, which create hurricanes, flooding, or very disturbing seasonal variations.

It is obvious that Quebec and Canada on their own cannot change the equation significantly. Our contribution is important, but it is not the only one. Canada as a whole emits 2% of these greenhouse gases, which means that the rest of the planet—and we can think particularly of the industrialized countries such as the United States—emits the other 98%. That is why Kyoto is so important. That is why there must be an international agreement between all countries, in order to reduce these emissions, which are creating a sort of Thermos bottle effect.

It will not be easy. I would even venture to say that it is very late in this planet's time line, but it is very important. I would urge all those who are listening at home and understand what I have to say,

not to hesitate to contact their MPs and to ask them to ensure that Canada does everything within its power to reduce greenhouse gases.

There are considerable variations within Canada. Quebec produces around 9 tonnes of gas per inhabitant. That is a lot. This means that, by using electricity produced by a thermal plant, gasoline in my car, and a variety of other products, including clothing containing plastics, I am causing nine tonnes of CO₂ or related gases to be produced.

• (2210)

In Alberta, however, with the industries being what they are, the figure is 56 tonnes per person. That is six times more than the figure for Quebec. From sea to sea, people must become aware and we must lower our production of greenhouse gas. We must set the example so that other countries will follow and we can avoid the worst.

The worst occurs when there is no more snow on ski hills in Quebec. The worst occurs when the prairies can no longer produce wheat. The worst occurs when we are invaded by all sorts of insects and diseases carried along by the increased temperatures.

I know you do not need convincing, Madam Speaker, but I hope our viewers tonight will understand the importance of this debate.

[*English*]

Mrs. Karen Kraft Sloan (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Madam Speaker, over the next century global temperatures are predicted to undergo change greater than any seen in the past 10,000 years. This will create a chain reaction, impairing the Earth's hydrology, geochemistry and botany. As a result, planetary aquatic and terrestrial life forms will be stressed, economic, industrial and commercial activities will be challenged, and socio-political relationships will be strained.

Even with concerted substantive action today we will see a doubling of CO₂ in the next century. Even with stabilization by 2010 it will still take a significant timeframe to rid the atmosphere of the greenhouse gases to the point where the current rise in global temperatures is restored to a level decreed in the UN framework convention on climate change 1992. It stated that such a level should allow ecosystems to adapt naturally to climate change to ensure that food production is not threatened and to enable economic development to proceed in a sustainable way.

Roger Street, one of the editors of Environment Canada's recent "Canada Country Study" said that climate is a key defining variable for Canada, it defines our social and economic well-being. Natural processes are inextricably linked and when one fundamental piece, like climate, is so dramatically altered, no other natural

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process is immune. With that fact in mind and to paraphrase Mr. Street, our social and economic well-being will be altered as well.

I fear that our institutions, political, economic and social, have not kept pace to adequately respond to the changes we have created in our natural environment. Our ability to mitigate harmful human interference and adapt to negative impacts of climate change is seriously hampered.

Natural laws are immutable. There is nothing we can do as legislators in this place, pass laws, make policy and act on these, that could ever supersede nature. When we attempt to do so, we put at risk the health and well-being of all of the Earth's community, including ourselves.

We must learn our lesson from climate change. We must legislate and govern as if the Earth mattered.

Because we cannot fool nature, we must accept that action be realistic and effective in actually dealing with the issue of global climate change.

The eyes of the world will be on Kyoto next week as representatives from the planet's governments convene to negotiate an agreement. There are many proposals for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. We should acknowledge the effort put forward by the nations of the world in recognizing the seriousness of the problem and their willingness to propose solutions.

There is concern however that some of the solutions have loopholes attached, loopholes which would exclude HFCs, PFCs and SF₆, which are rapidly growing and could contribute at least 5% more to greenhouse gas emissions. Other loopholes would inflate the baseline year emissions thus making it appear easier for countries to achieve stabilization.

Whatever legally binding agreement is negotiated at Kyoto, it must be clear, express and provide targets and criteria to repair damage to natural systems. Not paper reductions but real reductions that can be measured by nature's account balance.

More important than Kyoto however is what we do after in Canada. Climate change is a global issue, but the dialogue and action begins at home. We have a duty. The duty is to engage Canadians. The solutions to address climate change exist. They exist in our homes, communities, office towers, shop floors, classrooms and labs and they exist here in this place.

• (2215)

The public and private sectors and individual Canadians and their communities must all make a fair contribution to solving a problem of climate change. We must build on the exemplary work of the Canada Country Study. It is the first ever national assessment of the social, biological and economic impact of climate change,

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which includes regional studies, sectoral analysis and reports on cost cutting issues.

Environment Canada brought together experts from government, industry, academia and non government organizations to complete this study. The Canada Country Study tells us that impacts will range in both degree and variability, depending on the region of the country and the economic sector. Make no mistake, all parts of Canada, all Canadians will be affected.

Greenhouse gas emissions from transportation, utilities, energy extraction and production and industrial and commercial residential sources vary from region to region depending on predominant economic activities. Any realistic post-Kyoto implementation strategy should include a range of mitigation measures reflecting the diversity of Canada's regions and sectors.

Energy efficiency is crucial to the reduction of greenhouse gases. Energy efficiency and conservation initiatives implemented by Natural Resources Canada from 1990 to 1995 resulted in energy savings of approximately \$4 billion a year to the Canadian economy.

The private sector must be encouraged to increase energy efficiencies. A number of initiatives currently exist and must be expanded. For example, insurance companies are starting to offer energy savings insurance policies to commercial and municipal operations to provide their lenders with security for the repayment of energy saving building retrofits.

Engaging Canadians individually and in their communities is central to achieving greenhouse gas reductions. The Ontario Green Communities program is a community success story. Green communities are community based, non-profit, multi-partner environmental organizations. They achieve results by mobilizing community co-operation and providing practical services and advice. The mission of green communities is to build sustainable communities by conserving resources, preventing pollution and protecting and enhancing natural ecological processes.

This year with the support of Environment Canada, the Green Communities Association launched a national initiative to promote the establishment of new community based networks across Canada to build national partnerships and establish a national alliance. A significant component of their activities is the residential retrofit program which will help engage Canadians in the reduction of greenhouse gases.

Another success story is the Federation of Canadian Municipalities 20% Club. Members of the 20% Club bring national objectives on climate change together with local voluntary initiatives.

The federal government plays a pivotal leadership role in engaging Canadians, communities, industry, along with the public sector in the national effort to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Environment Canada's community based programs involve Cana-

dians at the community level. Their support of the Green Communities Association means Canadians can increase awareness of climate change and contribute to the betterment of the natural environment.

Environment Canada's Canada Country Study involved hundreds of Canadians in the assessment of socioeconomic impacts of climate change. The shift to energy efficiency can be accelerated by fiscal policies that support and encourage residential and commercial retrofit, the development of renewable and alternative energy and increased usage of natural gas. These policies can be financed by shifting funds away from fiscal initiatives that encourage perverse ecological subsidies.

Energy efficiency activities are job creators. The shift to this sector would encourage technological innovations to flourish in environmental industries that will increase trading opportunities for Canadian firms.

This a win-win agenda. It is an agenda that engages all Canadians in the very important national effort to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Mr. Rick Laliberte (Churchill River, NDP): Madam Speaker, coming from Churchill River, I have certainly learned a lot in the last few months since entering the 36th Parliament. Coming from my neck of the woods and realizing that we live in a huge carbon sink, I thought it was a major, startling discovery on my part. Then I had a chance to look at the international comments and the lack of Canadian dialogue.

• (2220)

Nobody's talking about greenhouse gas emissions and climate change in this country. The media went to sleep on it. The opposition has not collectively raised the issue except on the carbon tax issue. The government has barely taken any leadership on it. That is the political rhetoric of it.

As an individual and as an aboriginal person, my learnings and my world view—

[Editor's Note: Member spoke in Cree]

[English]

If we look at the future and we look at the seven generations to come, our present emissions that we are having today outside in this world will have an effect seven generations from now. We are the effect of the generations to come. We will never know these children. We will never know them but they are ours. Collectively all our children are coming.

I went to Tokyo to hear the pre-Kyoto talks which they call the ad hoc group of the Berlin mandate. This is what the draft agreement includes. These are the topics of discussion and negotiation internationally. When they go to Kyoto next week this is what they will hear: legally binding targets, something that is going to

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press beyond voluntary which is what the Reform is afraid of; the joint implementation where countries can purchase and invest in other countries of the world and get permits and benefits for their efforts; technology transfer.

Where we find a startling discovery in one of our universities or research labs in Canada, we can sell and transfer this technology for the betterment of humankind, for competition or for the betterment of our generosity for all the peoples of the world.

Capital investment is very interesting because money talks and that is what we found here in Canada. We have not put money toward this.

The United Nations has a global environment fund which the developing countries are hoping will grow. On official development assistance, ODA funds, developed countries, annex 1 countries are creating funds and investing elsewhere.

On bilateral agreements, the United States can have a bilateral agreement with Chile to preserve its sink and do development and research for that purpose and also capital investment. Here in Canada we do not have an investment within our own domestic efforts. I will come back to that.

There is also the tradable permits. That is a major discussion at the international table. We cannot hide from that. It is being discussed by all the nations of the world. Tradable permits are putting a carbon value. However, it is a negative value, but it is going to be a polluter pays. It is a short term measure until we clean up our lifestyle. It is an instrument to get us on the right track. We are at a crossroads here. The journey started in Rio. We have not done anything yet, but Kyoto is going to be a crossroads on which way we are going to go.

When we talk about sinks, it is a carbon reservoir. As the hon. member from the Conservative Party mentioned, the whole equator and rain forest is a major sink but we also have the Boreal forest which is a major sink. Internationally what they are recognizing as sinks are manageable forests, not wild forests.

Who is speaking on behalf of our bogs and muskegs in the back woods of our country which are not manageable? It is beyond imagination to manage the northern Churchill area because it is beyond manageable or economic effort.

The other aspect is how many greenhouse gases are in this negotiation? Three as presently in the agreement or a total of six? There are six gases that should be discussed, not just three.

As I mentioned, this is the international draft. It is happening. It is at the international table. We never heard about it. The CBC or CTV, the national media outlets that we depend upon, do not even have an outlet in Japan. They do not even have a correspondent in Japan to let us know what the negotiations have been in Tokyo,

Bonn or anywhere else in the world. The media plays an important part.

• (2225)

Domestically, I call on the government to talk about a national atmospheric fund, a major revolving fund in this country, as a challenge of consciousness. We spend about \$600 million as a tax incentive for the oil sands industry. Why could we not put \$600 million on a revolving fund to lever atmospheric positive measures for good energy use, a good livelihood, good perceptions by the media, good initiatives given by municipalities, large or small and maybe the automobile industry? Maybe some day we will have a Canadian automobile, one we can truly call our own which will be environmentally friendly. Let us challenge ourselves. Let us challenge our intellectual and engineering communities. Let the industries put their minds and money toward this as well, not just take the profits and run.

Maybe we should revisit the incentives and the tax breaks that we give to major industries and make sure they are put in an appropriate place.

On the issue of preserving our forests, there are forests in the province of Manitoba. When a forest fire makes a major break, it is left to burn because there is no commercial forest there. There is no dollar value on the northern boreal forests. Why not put the forest fire out, giving employment to the people who live up there and preserving the sink? It is releasing carbon as it happens.

Transitional funding is a major issue. It has to be addressed through Human Resources Development or the industry. There will be transitions in training for the workforce of the future. There is going to be transitional funding for industry.

The Minister of the Environment raised the issue of the coal industry. There is not going to be a total eradication of the coal industry immediately, which is the conclusion that everyone jumps to. It may be a slow generational process by the next generation of workers to look at a different industry. It is not wholehearted.

We look at the international negotiations like a bubble. The European Community, which is a huge trading block of common currency, has now described itself as a bubble. Japan pointed out that France does not have to cut its emissions for the next 15 years because they will be getting credits from other nations within the European Community.

Canada is a bubble in itself. Alberta and Saskatchewan and the coal industries in Nova Scotia should not be afraid because we have to address this as a nation, not by regions. We have to do it as a collective effort for humankind.

The hon. leader of the opposition mentioned a very precious species in his perspective is the taxpayer. I think all species should be considered, not just the human species, but all living species. The humans of this world also live on the living beings of this

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earth. There are living beings in the oceans and in the air, truly the gift of mother earth. That is what we are taking care of and that is what the future of generations to come will depend upon.

I would like to call it the term of greed, which in my language is—

[*Editor's note: Member spoke in Cree*]

[*English*]

When we are greedy, when we want something so much, that is sinful. In that perspective I would like to call on the conscience of all the people of Canada, the people who are listening out there to be aware of the issue of climate change. There are disruptions. We just had a temperature of plus 10 degrees Celsius in downtown Saskatoon the other day. That is a major disruption. We will never know what the full effects will be on the economy, or on our health as scientists are telling us. We just have to look at it and take on the challenge.

The figure of 20% by the year 2005 was an achievable goal a few years ago. Now we have increased 13%. I call on all Canadians to take on the leadership, go to Kyoto and when we come back the race will be on. It started in Rio. It does not start next month.

• (2230)

Mr. Joe Jordan (Leeds—Grenville, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to congratulate my colleague from Churchill River for some extremely insightful and timely remarks.

I would like to request unanimous consent to split both my time and question period with the member for Waterloo—Wellington.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): Does the hon. member have the consent of the House to split his time?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Joe Jordan: Thank you for the consent. I happen to think this is a good speech but I am sure you did not want to hear it twice.

I welcome the opportunity to speak about this important topic and would like to congratulate all parties for the co-operative effort that resulted in this debate being possible.

In terms of the consequences of atmospheric change, I hold the opinion, and I will preface this by admitting freely that I have absolutely no scientific background, but I hold a rather simplistic view that non-sustainable practices are going to catch up with us in a number of significant areas.

If someone is waiting for indisputable empirical confirmation of the problem, I would suggest that they will be waiting a long time because nature does not speak through science. She speaks through symbols and signals, like climate change, like increased acidity in

water systems, depleted resources, the extinction of species and any number of other signs directly linked to environmental degradation.

The Reform Party has shown signs of enlightenment specifically in two of the three *r*'s, reduce and recycle. It has effectively reduced its credibility on this issue to zero and its stated position so far has contained 95% recycled material.

In addition to supporting research and simple observation, we can also see confirmation of the problem from the corporate sector. The insurance industry, a sector that survives with the successful calculation in management of risk is all over this issue like a cheap suit. The very real threat of claims involving too much water, too little water or water at the wrong times of year have set this industry on its ear.

While I readily admit that I could not tell the difference between CO₂ and CO₁, I do know that money does not talk, it swears. I need no further proof that we have an impending problem. I also believe that this is just the tip of the melting iceberg.

My greatest fear is that this argument, which is not unlike the one that plagued progress on smoking legislation, will delay action at the expense of future generations. I feel we have a moral obligation to address these issues in a responsible, logical, timely and co-operative manner. The clock is ticking and the earth is warming and we are not going to get too many chances at successful intervention.

What is important is not our position going in to Kyoto. It is the nature of the agreement coming out. Simply reducing the argument to green versus growth may be strategically sound but it shows a fundamental lack of knowledge on the issues involved.

Clearly growth strategies and the pursuit of wealth do nothing to help the environment. I am not saying growth is bad. What I am saying is that unless we discover life on another planet, in the long term it is a dead end street. It is in the long term interest, the environmental interest, economic interest and social interest of all Canadians that we lead the world in the adjustment to this new economy. We certainly need to strike a balance between short and long term interests.

The challenge we collectively face as politicians is this. Addressing these issues is going to involve leadership. It is going to involve increased levels of co-operation. It is going to involve making decisions with the goal of improving the human condition for future generations.

We are being asked to take a certain amount of risk to effect change in a world in which we will have no direct share. The potential Kyoto agreement is an excellent start and will serve to

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jump start an upward spiral of net economic gain through the adoption of sustainable practices.

In conclusion, it becomes clear that our country and indeed our planet is faced with a number of environmental problems that are paralyzing policy makers by both the severity of their implications and by the complexity of the measures necessary to solve them.

It is not unlike the mythical Medusa. If we stare at this problem, it is paralyzing in its scope. Perseus managed to slay this demon by using a shield to reflect the image. I would like to suggest that we let our shield be the ingenuity, creativity and co-operative spirit of the Canadian people, of Canadian industries and I dare say Canadian politicians.

I will leave members with this final thought. If not Canada, who? And if not now, when?

• (2235)

Mr. Lynn Myers (Waterloo—Wellington, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I rise tonight to speak on this very important issue affecting all Canadians and indeed all people in the world.

On a snowy night in Ottawa global warming may not seem to be an issue of concern but I can assure you it is and members in this House know that it is. We know that almost 90% of Canadians believe that climate change is already occurring or will occur in the very near future. So this is indeed of great concern to all of us as Canadians and to all of us in the world.

Scientists are noting subtle yet significant changes in our environment and the effect of this over time could seriously damage our forests, our agriculture and our fresh water supply. It could also lead to the extinction of species, including polar bears, musk ox and caribou. Moreover it is no secret that a warming climate caused by greenhouse gases will lead to more illness and death in the next century unless steps are taken now. All of this I find most worrisome, as do all Canadians.

It should be noted that nine of the earth's warmest years since 1861 occurred after 1980. Each year the burning of fossil fuels introduces 22 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. While Canada may not be the largest polluter overall, we are the ninth largest. We have the second highest rate of greenhouse gas emissions per person. Since 1990 these emissions have increased by 13%.

The science of climate change is sound and it is compelling. Although we do not know everything, what we do know is more than enough to warrant responsible cost effective investment to address the problem.

The global climate is warming at a more rapid rate. This is due in large measure to a dramatic increase in the volume of greenhouse gases going into the atmosphere. The issue of global climate change is very important in the upcoming conference in Kyoto,

Japan. Representatives from around the world will meet to put in place a plan to deal with that change.

Canada needs to and will push for new meaningful, realistic and equitable legally binding targets to limit greenhouse gas emissions. This will be done by developing Canada's position on climatic change with partners from all across Canada, provincial governments, municipal governments, industry and non-governmental organizations.

Our position must be, and must be perceived to be, fair among all regions, provinces and industries. We will endorse emission targets that can be realistically achieved on a step by step basis. We must do this because Canada must be part of the international solution. To do otherwise would be untenable and irresponsible.

All Canadians must be engaged in this debate. Canadians need to understand the science of climate change, the resources and the measures which have been taken to date and what actions they can take to ensure that greenhouse gas emissions are reduced. Overcoming this problem will not be possible without the efforts and support of all Canadians.

[*Translation*]

The federal government will continue to look after the interests of all Canadians. It will lead us into the new millennium with vision and foresight.

[*English*]

The challenge of climate change does not have to be a crisis. We must take this opportunity to make Canada a more efficient and innovative nation. If we meet this challenge, and we will and we must, it will ensure the continued health of our planet. If we fail to meet it, our children and our grandchildren will pay an enormous price.

We need to work very hard to ensure that this will not happen. All Canadians need to work hard on this issue. We owe it to the generations that follow.

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Transcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thought I might share a little story about the nature of environmental destruction, environmental problems and ask the member to respond. It is really just a way of getting this little story on the record. I remember reading this about 20 years ago. It was trying to illustrate the nature of environmental problems. They are often geometric or exponential in nature.

The story goes that you have to imagine a lily pond which is being covered by lily pads at a certain rate over the course of 28 days. It starts with one lily pad on the first day, two lily pads on the second day, 4, 8, 16, 32, 64, et cetera. The thing to remember in the covering of this pond with lily pads is that if this is a progression of pollution or environmental degradation, on the 27th day there is still half the lily pond uncovered.

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• (2240)

It is very easy to believe on the 27th day or on the 26th day or on the 25th day that the people who are saying there is a problem are wrong, because they can look out over half of the lily pond and say "These people are Chicken Little. These people say that the sky is falling. These people are exaggerating. They want us to take unnecessary measures". If they listen to that kind of advice in this story, when sitting on a lily pad on the 27th day they are saying there is no problem and on the next day boom, the entire pond is covered.

I ask members to consider whether or not this story is not constructive in some way. We do not know with respect to greenhouse gas emissions whether we are on the 27th day or the 26th or the 25th, but we are close. We are somewhere in the twenties and it is incumbent upon us to act.

Mr. Lynn Myers: Madam Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member opposite for that wonderful story. I am not sure where it was going or where it was leading but it was wonderful nevertheless.

It is imperative that Canadians, men and women of good faith ensure that we do what we must for the environment. I think that is important and certainly that is the position of this government. We will continue to do so.

Mr. John Herron (Fundy—Royal, PC): Madam Speaker, Canada has always been regarded as a world leader and a driving force on critical issues which threaten the preservation of our environment.

The Progressive Conservative years were characterized by action and leadership. In contrast this government is long on improvising and short on planning and implementation when it comes to protecting the environment and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. This is just as true for the last four years as it has been for the last four weeks.

The Kyoto conference on climate change is less than one week away. This government is flying by the seat of its pants and has said nothing about its position for Kyoto. What it fails to recognize is that any target is irrelevant when there is no plan in place to achieve it.

In absence of an implementation strategy, set targets amount to nothing more than good intentions. To be effective, our position must be informed by science, enhanced by government and anchored in society's will. Only when society is fully engaged will our policies and strategies succeed.

The issue of climate change is real and it is complex. It is a fact that there is a discernible human influence on global climate change.

It is true that the world's scientists do not know the exact consequences. However it is a disservice to misrepresent to Canadians that the science is divided as some of my colleagues in this House have tried to do.

I actually understand why the Reform Party does not understand the science beyond this and it does not believe in global warming. I think it is because it still lives in the ice age.

As a northern and a marine nation we must be resolute in addressing this very serious problem. Global warming from a Canadian perspective is indeed a national problem. It challenges the environment of the town of Charlottetown, P.E.I. For the Reform members who actually represent some seats in western Canada, it also threatens the Fraser River delta in British Columbia.

This government's made in the U.S.A. approach is not leadership. The science and technology that addresses climate change is evolving. A target a decade or more away is likely to become irrelevant as the science continues to evolve. However the PC party will accept reaching 1990 levels by the year 2010 as an interim target as long as an implementation strategy accompanies this target.

The Minister of the Environment stated in this Chamber on October 22, 1997 in referring to the earth summit in Rio, "Frankly with respect when we made our commitment in Rio in 1992 we really were not aware of what we had to do to achieve our target". The environment minister should heed her own advice. Without an implementation strategy we will not build on the global efforts of the past five years in Rio, Berlin and Geneva.

• (2245)

The government has been so focused on trying to arrive at a target that it has forgotten to develop an implementation strategy for home. It has been conspicuously quiet on its negotiating strategy in relation to economic instruments and in clarifying what is not on the Kyoto table. In no way should a Kyoto position include potential trade sanctions for any non-compliance.

As the auditor general has stated, the government has a vast implementation gap when addressing environmental issues.

Some hon. members across the way like to raise the record of the previous Conservative government to deflect attention away from their actions or lack thereof over the last four years on perhaps any subject.

My next comments may not be focused on the members in the House today, but they may be addressed to some of the individuals in the front row such as the finance minister, the defence minister, the fisheries minister and so on. The fisheries minister blamed us for the problems with respect to the salmon treaty when we were able to negotiate a deal.

If the Liberals want to compare records, our party is up to the challenge, especially with respect to the environment. Perhaps hon. members across they way forget that it was our party and our leader who developed the 1992 green plan. It was our government that brought in the Canadian Environmental Protection Act to control toxins. This government has failed to pass one piece of significant environmental legislation. Our party was responsible for the Montreal protocol which committed over 24 nations to the reduction of ozone depleting gases. Today over 150 countries have ratified this protocol.

Even the finance minister is trying to get in on the act. He claims that when the Liberals came into government—we heard his tirade the other day—nothing had been done on the environment. I remind the finance minister that we signed an air quality accord with the U.S. to control air pollution. Under our government and our leader we announced further measures for acid rain control. Under our leader Canada was the first country to ratify the UN conventions on biodiversity and greenhouse gas emissions. Under our leader we introduced a national protocol on packaging to reduce waste.

This government's record cannot even begin to match what was accomplished for the environment when our party and our leader were in government. For this government the environment has not been a priority.

On the greenhouse gas debate the government has not fully engaged the public at large, NGOs, municipalities and for that matter the provinces. While the minister has claimed she has been in dialogue with the provinces, the fact remains this government has not come forth with initiatives or economic instruments that will enable citizens, municipalities or even the provinces to implement any accord derived from Kyoto.

The Progressive Conservative Party realizes that Kyoto is not a conclusion but rather a small yet significant step forward in our collective political, social, economic and industrial adaptation to meet the challenge of climate change. Our party's focus is on developing a strategy that will enable us to meet our obligations. We have also focused on the mechanisms our government must present to the world community to be developed with both the industrialized and developing nations.

A global problem like climate change requires global solutions. The debate on reducing emissions must move away from the focus on who will lose as opposed to how we get the job done with as many win-win solutions as possible. An international solution must include commitments to develop international emissions trading systems, a joint implementation strategy and an acknowledgement of Canada's potential to be a carbon sink.

Engagement of developing countries may be the most critical issue that challenges our ability to address global warming. Even if

the industrialized nations are able to achieve significant reductions, the current rate of emissions growth in the developing world will still pose a problem.

Our made in Canada solution must be market driven, incentive based and focused on developing new technologies. New taxes are not part of a constructive solution.

The natural resource minister has said that progress toward a target can be made in setting energy efficiency standards, promoting technological advances and educating consumers on energy savings.

• (2250)

The minister is right, yet the government has lacked the initiative to implement a regime that supports these very comments. If the minister truly believes this is the case, why do we only allocate \$20 million annually to promote investment in both energy efficiency and renewable energy?

Without adequate funding for research and development and energy efficiency, and without incentives for early action for industry, Canada will continue to lag behind competing nations in this field which is full of vast opportunities for Canadians.

The implementation gap must be closed on public education as well. Most Canadians are unaware the everyday choices they made on an individual level can make a real difference.

Since the government has taken office the number of energy efficient R-2000 homes being built in Canada has fallen by 55%. Governments have a responsibility to enhance and level the playing field for the development and adoption of renewable sources of energy. Equitable tax incentives must be introduced for wind, solar and expanded hydro supply of energy.

A modern transportation policy must be developed for the 21st century. Challenging the automotive industry to develop more energy efficient vehicles is a component. The transportation sector is responsible for over one-third of carbon dioxide emissions in Canada.

In addition, we must move away from using carbon intensive fuels, such as moving from coal to natural gas wherever possible. This no regrets philosophy is the cornerstone of developing a workable solution.

I reiterate that environmental decisions made by governments which will affect us greatly into the 21st century must be informed by science. These decisions, in turn, must be enhanced by government, which has the responsibility to enhance the collective will and to provide leadership. Only when policies and strategies are anchored in society's will can they succeed.

I close by quoting the hon. member for Davenport who stated in June 1994 "If our voices our strong, the speed of progress will be swift".

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Mr. Rick Laliberte (Churchill River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, having only 10 minutes to comment is a very limited time on such a major issue.

The Deputy Speaker: Is the hon. member asking a question or making a comment on this speech?

Mr. Rick Laliberte: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Then he does not have 10 minutes; he has five. He has less than that, in fact.

Mr. Rick Laliberte: Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the hon. member his perception of something.

A premature view is evident among countries. The United States says that if China or other developing countries do not sign the agreement, the United States will not sign. The Regina agreement indicated that if the United States did not sign, Canada should not sign.

The member talked about a made in Canada solution. With Canada emitting 2% of total global emissions, does he believe that Canada could take the lead? Or, should Canada hold back and follow other nations? Should we be a role model for developing nations, as a developed country, or should we wait until everybody complies?

Mr. John Herron: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question. He raises a very important issue.

It is possible that the result in Kyoto could be no deal. Just because there is no deal, does that mean we should continue our inaction on this issue? I say no.

We have to make an effort to engage the developing countries because China and India are the second and fifth largest emitters of carbon dioxide in the world. At a minimum we have to try to engage the developing nations. I believe we can work in a very constructive fashion to bring in a phased in program for the developing countries.

At the end of the day whatever position is reached in Kyoto, or perhaps not, the challenge before us from a Canadian perspective is to show a leadership role and to develop a very distinct implementation strategy for the country.

• (2255)

Mr. Gerry Byrne (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to address this very important issue on the minds of all Canadians and of the entire globe.

I speak on several fronts from my experience as an environmental biologist. I have experience from an academic point of view and from a practitioner's point of view in the fields of community forestry, community based aquaculture and a number of other community based industries striving for sustainable development

in rural communities in my home province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

The basis of the experience I am bringing to this debate is my own personal experience working in the field of science, working in the field of sustainable development, and working in a province which I think is very nobly showing great leadership in moving ahead in the field of sustainable development and contributing to the solutions to global warming and the problem of climate change.

I come from the province of Newfoundland and Labrador where we have on our doorsteps one of the most vast offshore energy resources in the world. The Hibernia field and the Jeanne d'Arc Basin are producing and have the potential to produce significant energy resources that will be used by global trading partners.

This is why I am very pleased to contribute to the discussion on Canada's role in increasing energy efficiency, Canada's role in increasing responsible consumption, and Canada's role in providing global leadership on this issue.

We also have in our province one of the cleanest sources of renewable energy found in the Lower Churchill Falls project. Hydroelectricity will be for North America one of our great advantages in terms of producing sustainable successful results in reducing our carbon levels so that we achieve the greenhouse gas reduction targets that we have set out.

I speak as a scientist with a laboratory in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador. As has been raised during the course of this debate, I have been witness to the destruction of the northern cod stocks. While others in the House speak from third hand information, I was in northern Newfoundland during the time of the cod crisis and experienced first hand the consequences of inaction and the consequences of not listening to science.

I feel very strongly that we have to listen to the scientists on this issue. I note that my colleagues opposite are now publicly saying that we should strictly be basing fisheries management decisions on science and science alone; that administrators should be exempt from the process of setting total allowable catches, exempt from determining the total biomass availability; and that science and science alone should be the guiding consequence. Hon. members of the Reform Party are saying now that the issue of global warming and climate change is in their backyard that scientists are quacks.

That is an absolute outrage. When it is not in their backyard science should be the guiding factor, but when it potentially is in their backyard scientists are quacks. I think that is reprehensible. Quite frankly inaction, not listening to scientists, is what got us in trouble in 1990.

That is why we as parliamentarians have the responsibility to listen to the advice available to us. To do nothing is irresponsible.

While members opposite have found the new luxury of promoting their own environmental agenda and their own environmental

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performance of the past, it was the Conservative government of the day that refused to act on the science in 1990. It refused to embrace the challenges of fisheries management. Instead of listening to science in 1990 it began the process of listening to the major fish corporations. It said enterprise allocations, regardless of the science, quoting the then minister, the Hon. Bernard Valcourt and others—it is very important that this be noted on the record—“the economic consequences are far, far too great”.

• (2300)

Right now in Atlantic Canada we are experiencing the economic consequences of not acting appropriately and not acting in a timely fashion. While others may laud their fisheries management practices in terms of the west coast in putting together the Pacific Fisheries Treaty, I suggest on the Atlantic coast we have been witness in a very real and tangible way to the consequences of the inaction.

As the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, I say that we are dedicated and committed to action on this issue in a way which is responsible, which meets the needs of Canadians. That is action.

I would like to point out that in Newfoundland and Labrador, while we are participating in the energy industry, we are also participating in the solutions. That is what Canadians expect of us.

I would like to point out some other examples of actions which are providing solutions. For example, Alcan Smelter and Chemicals Ltd. is replacing its older facilities with new plants built with the latest technology. Carbon dioxide emissions will be reduced at this facility by more than 350,000 tonnes.

There are examples across the country where we can employ energy efficiency, where we can employ better technologies and where we can respond to the science that we know exists today rather than burying our heads in the sand like ostriches and trying to pretend the problem does not exist. What we have to do is act. That is exactly what we intend to do.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for allowing me to participate in this debate. I know that it causes quite a high degree of debate between members as to who is responsible and who is not. However, I think that clearly we are all responsible as parliamentarians to participate in the solutions, to participate in developing answers rather than just simply saying “it is he or she who did not act in the past”. What we have to do is recognize that this is the time and the place to act. Let us start doing it.

Mr. Rick Casson (Lethbridge, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I just want to make a comment and question the hon. member across.

I am on the standing committee of environment and sustainable development. Over the last while we have had numerous scientists come to us as witnesses. One of the people who came to us was a scientist from Newfoundland, an oceanographer. He had quite a different view of what was going on. He studies the oceans and he did not think that there was quite the reaction occurring in the world that others did.

One question I tried to ask most of the scientists who came to us was with today’s technology and computerization and the methods we have of measuring things, if you had five or ten more years of accurate data added on to the data you already have, would this help narrow down the projections that scientists are coming up with? Would you be able to be more accurate?

Mr. Gerry Byrne: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in response to the comments and the question.

Unfortunately, I cannot respond to the comment about the oceanographer because there was no specific information provided. I will suggest that new, more, better information is always important. That is one of the reasons why Canada is a world leader in providing satellite technology and providing environmental monitoring. Always as a country, as a globe we should be striving to provide better information on the environment. Canada is successfully developing a world class industry in that regard, providing services to countries around the globe and that is actually providing jobs for Canadians.

• (2305)

That is why I say that the challenge of global warming is significant and of a huge magnitude. However, the opportunities for Canadians to embrace the problem and seek solutions and to actively engage in the solution provides us with unique opportunities.

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources would answer a question. I know he was talking some time earlier about the fisheries and the role of science, et cetera. In his role of parliamentary secretary and given his proximity to the government’s plan on how to deal with greenhouse gas emissions, I wonder if he could tell me whether there is any plan on the part of the government to reinvest substantially in rail transportation in this country and re-regulate the transportation industry in the country to favour rail transportation over other modes of transportation.

It has seemed to me for a long time and, in fact, my maiden speech in the House was to some degree about one thing we could do to reduce greenhouse gas emissions would be to create a transportation regime in the country that would move more freight and people by train. Instead, we have had 10 to 15 years of deregulation that has put more and more trucks on the highways.

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There are trucks on the highways that look like trains, for God's sake. There is less and less safety, more and more emissions and still there is no end to this madness.

I ask the parliamentary secretary, is there a plan? Does the government intend to use this opportunity that the climate changes presents it with to reverse the madness of the last 10 or 15 years by which we have deregulated in such a way to favour trucks over rail and have in fact created what I consider to be not only an environmental crisis, but a public safety crisis in terms of our highways and our environment.

Mr. Gerry Byrne: Mr. Speaker, there is more than a plan. There is action. One thing the government realizes is that transportation is actually a major producer of greenhouse gases. It is one of the major, major producers of greenhouse gases. That is why the government has dedicated itself to increasing energy efficiency, not just in the transportation sector, but as well in the heating of buildings and other things. Energy efficiency is exactly where this country should be going and where we are taking it.

I promote very strongly that federal buildings and government vehicles right across the government increase their energy efficiency by using different types of energy sources. As well, we are always actively engaged in the debate regarding transportation policy and creating greater efficiencies.

That is one object of the Canada Transportation Act, which I will happily engage in debate about. It is providing economic efficiencies and also creating an opportunity for greater efficiencies in terms of the transportation routes. Instead of duplicating loads, companies are now providing better services more cheaply, but most importantly, with reduced use of fuel.

Mr. David Chatters (Athabasca, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to participate in the debate, particularly after sitting here all evening and listening to the debate and being very annoyed at the gross distortion of the Reform Party position on this issue and the undignified and unwarranted personal attacks on members of the Reform Party.

The Reform Party certainly has never put forward a position that we should not do anything. That could not be further from the truth. Certainly we believe that all prudent measures to reduce emissions and pollution should be done that can be effectively done without committing economic suicide, which is what this government is bound and determined to achieve.

We neither want to commit economic suicide nor be isolated in the world by implementing a program that has no real plan, no global plan for implementation, forcing other countries around the world to participate.

• (2310)

I think it would be truly tragic to end up in a situation like that. For the life of me, I cannot understand how intelligent people can totally ignore any of the conflicting science on this issue. There is hard data written on pieces of paper collected by scientists that without any doubt prove that the global climate has not warmed since 1940. The data is there and is indisputable.

There are scientists who participated in the IPCC, 2,500 is the number talked about, who say that their scientific data was misinterpreted and misrepresented for political purposes.

How intelligent people can discount all those things and engage in psychological terrorism and coercing Canadians into taking some action that is going to be extremely costly and harmful to the Canadian economy is beyond me. Quite frankly, I think it is unethical and dishonest.

There must be a broad public debate and discussion in this country. We must bring ordinary Canadians into the discussion because after listening to this issue in the House, in committee and in the media, it becomes very obvious that the people who are going to pay the price are going to be the ordinary taxpayers.

Governments have engaged industry in the dialogue. Industry has presented a strong position. I think the government has listened to industry to a great degree in talks about tradable credits and the voluntary challenge program and a lot of these other things that will likely work for industry. However, industry is only one-third of the problem. Another third is the transportation sector and the other third is people themselves.

Certainly while some interests have been addressed, some certainly have not been. This shroud of secrecy over the Liberal government's position gives cause for great concern and fear in the general Canadian public and not unwarranted.

I heard the member for Ottawa West—Nepean tonight quote Maurice Strong as a world authority on this issue. Maurice Strong, for those who do not know, was the chairman in Rio who stood up and said that the only salvation of the globe was the total dismantling of the industrial society. It was the Liberal responsibility to achieve that. If that does not strike fear into the hearts of Canadians, I do not know what will.

This refusal to develop a dialogue and a position and to simply announce one-upmanship against the Americans indicates to me that the greatest interest here is not in the interest of Canada, it is in the interest of grooming someone to be a greener leader or the world's boy scout who is going to save the world faster than the next leader. I do not think that really serves us well.

The Canadian reality is that we are a huge country and a cold country with a very sparsely and disperse population and with

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great dependence on the resource industries. Based on that, it is important that we get this whole issue into perspective.

Canada only produces 2% of the world's greenhouse gases. China and India are huge contributors to the problem and they are not even part of this discussion. In fact, it is ludicrous that we would take leading action to solve the problem without engaging some of these other countries. If we, tomorrow morning, were to achieve the commitment that the government talks about, the achievement of 1990 levels by the year 2010, without engaging India, China and some of the other countries, it would take a mere 25 days for that benefit that Canada produced to be used up by the third world. Only 25 days and we would not have accomplished anything except to destroy our economic base in this country. I think it would be quite foolish to do that.

● (2315)

As I said before, what we are mostly lacking in this debate is a public debate engaging all Canadians in the issue. That has not happened and it is not likely to happen now until after Kyoto, until the government has signed a binding legal agreement that leaves it little flexibility if Canadians do not buy into this scenario.

If we think we hear emotions in the House tonight on this issue, wait until the government starts to implement this program and passes the cost of this program on to ordinary Canadians. We should think back to last winter when there was a large increase in the price of propane. For senior citizens in my riding on fixed income, the price of their heating fuel doubled and caused them great hardship. They could not afford to buy groceries. People called me from reserves in northern Alberta. They could not afford to buy heating fuel for their homes.

Look at the outrage in Toronto last summer when there was only a temporary spike in the price of gasoline. There were calls for investigation and government action immediately and it was nothing compared to what this government is proposing. I am afraid.

Canadians should be well aware of the fact that they are now paying over 60% of their income in one form of tax or another. Real take home income has been shrinking in this country for a long time thanks to ever increasing taxes. I do not really think there is a mood out there for further increases to the degree this government is proposing.

It is very important that we take a balanced approach, a careful approach, a cautious approach. We have never disputed and we do not dispute that Canada's environmental situation is in serious trouble. It is in serious trouble all around the world from a number of sources.

We heard the Conservatives talk about the wonderful things they had achieved. The member for Davenport, in spite of that wonderful achievement on cleaning up pulp mills, introduced a debate in the House about how this government has in fact exempted pulp

mills and they continue to pour dioxins and furans into Canada's water system.

We have a potential Chernobyl in the suburbs of Toronto with a nuclear power plant and we have an ever growing stockpile of nuclear waste around the world that nobody has figured out what to do with.

Our environment is in serious trouble, but that does not mean we need to do the kinds of things this government is proposing to do to solve the problem. Prudent action is in order. Responsible action is in order and our party supports doing that. We just urge caution.

Ms. Carolyn Bennett (St. Paul's, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would urge my colleagues across the floor, and particularly their leader, to take heed from a significant group of taxpayers in western Canada, the physicians from out west.

I would like to read the physicians' statement on climate change from the Alberta Medical Association, the British Columbia Paediatric Society, the UBC department of paediatrics, the Yukon Medical Association, the faculty of medicine at UBC and the Family Physicians of Canada, the Alberta chapter.

The first two signatories to this climate change are Dr. David Bates, professor emeritus from the University of British Columbia, and Dr. Tee Guidotti, professor and director of the occupational health program, faculty of medicine, at the University of Alberta. These people are not in agreement with members opposite and I implore them, if they will not listen to the scientists, at least listen to the physicians out west.

● (2320)

What these people are saying is that as physicians they fear that global climate change carries with it significant health, environmental, economic and social risks and that preventive steps are justified.

They say that all human health is ultimately dependent on the health of the biosphere. Scientists believe that climate change will have major irreversible effects on the environment with secondary consequences for human health and well-being that could occur within a matter of decades.

These impacts include increased mortality and illness due to heat stress, worsened air pollution, increased incidence of vector borne infectious disease, expanding populations of pest species, and impaired food production and nutrition. Extreme weather events such as floods, droughts and wind storms could endanger lives and create environmental refugees.

As physicians they believe in the wisdom of preventive measures, and therefore they urge prompt and effective action to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases. Canada has one of the highest per capita emission rates of greenhouse gases in the world. It has become urgent that Canada provide scientific, technical, economic

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and diplomatic leadership in the worldwide effort to significantly reduce greenhouse gases.

I also want members in the official opposition know that this erudite body, some of whose members even voted for them, in separate resolutions and the CMA and the CPHA are calling on the federal government to reaffirm at the Kyoto convention on climate change in December its position of achieving 20% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by the year 2005.

I urge the Speaker to implore the official opposition to actually include a few more stakeholders in its consultations. The physicians of western Canada are watching.

Mr. David Chatters: Mr. Speaker, I am not sure where the question was but certainly that erudite body the hon. member referred to is entitled to its opinion, as are all other Canadians.

The problem has been that all Canadians have not been engaged in this debate. They have not had a chance to express their fears and their opinions. Based on an implementation plan that the government would put forward, the group the member talks about could probably pay double what it is paying now for car gasoline without creating serious hardship.

I think there is also a very large group of middle income to lower income Canadians who would suffer huge hardship when this plan is implemented and the prices of energy rise significantly. There are both points of view out there.

Mr. Clifford Lincoln (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to refer to the comments of the member about the IPCC, also preceded by his colleagues in the same vein.

I want to quote Dr. Bert Bolin, chairman of the IPCC: "This thorough and completely open process has guaranteed that the summaries of a wide ownership in no way can be described as the work of a select few. The process provides justification for the description of substantial scientific consensus".

I think the hon. member's whole set-up about IPCC is the work of the oil and gas lobby that has been parroting this thing in the States and here for a long time.

Mr. David Chatters: Mr. Speaker, pure greenhouse gas. I said in my presentation that I was not speaking on behalf of the energy industry or any particular industry. I think it has done an excellent job of representing itself and I think to a great degree it has protected its interests.

What I said was there were scientists who were part of those 2,500 scientists who were most upset because their scientific evidence was distorted and misrepresented. I think that is a valid position for them to take.

Mr. Clifford Lincoln (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that is totally false. Name them.

An hon. member: John Balling, Jr.

Mr. Clifford Lincoln: John Balling, Jr. represents Western Fuels and British Coal Mining Association. That is who pays him. He was not part of the IPCC. He was paid by the oil and gas industry, a trillion-million dollar industry. But Michaels, Balling, Singer, Dr. Richard Lindzen, all paid by the oil and gas industry, are the people the member's leader quoted.

• (2325)

In the fall of 1987 as minister of the environment of Quebec I was a member of the Canadian delegation of the United Nations when Mrs. Gro Harlem Brundtland presented the now famous report of the World Commission on Environment and Development, "Our Common Future".

The lead speaker after Mrs. Brundtland was the President of the Maldives, Mahmood Abdul Gayoom. He described the natural beauty of his island state of many hundreds of islands in the Indian Ocean south of India as ecological jewels on a cushion of blue. He told us about the tidal waves that had started to visit his islands. He explained that the water surrounding the islands had always been steady and calm until the eighties when they were visited for the first time by giant tidal waves. The first time the waves caused significant damage. The second time they were more fierce and damage was correspondingly severe, and the third time they caused havoc which included considerable destruction and, sadly, human injury and death.

Way back then, 10 years ago, President Gayoom addressed us, the rich industrialized world, in this way:

Scientists tell us that in the next century the seas could rise drastically, maybe between 1 and 3 meters. If it was something in between, my island-state would disappear under the sea completely. We have no plants and no factories that spew carbon gases into the atmosphere, yet our innocent people must pay the price of your activities, and your negligence. Is this right, is this fair?

I ask is it right and fair? Is it acceptable to Canadians who believe so strongly in equity and justice? Is it right, fair and acceptable that we should be the second ranking world champions per capita of carbon emissions, a close second to the greenhouse champions the United States?

[Translation]

I realize that some continue to pretend that climatic change and the huge global threat posed by the increase in greenhouse gases are just a myth spread by environmentalists and tree huggers.

As I was listening to the leader of the official opposition earlier and after many years of environmental work, I wondered if the hon. member and I live on the same planet. The hon. member should talk to people from the Maldives, from Barbados, from the

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Marshall Islands, or from 40 small island states, who live in constant fear that sea levels will continue to rise.

Meanwhile, the leader of the opposition speaks like the dinosaur he is.

[*English*]

I wonder how many people from Burundi and Mali and Benin he has spoken to about the visibly encroaching desert in Africa.

[*Translation*]

The very limited time at my disposal does not allow me to mention in detail the countless examples which clearly demonstrate that the impact of greenhouse gases is not only real but has already begun to cause dramatic climatic changes in many parts of the world.

As mentioned earlier, the UN intergovernmental panel on climatic change includes some 2,000 of the greatest scientific experts on climate, whose work and findings are systematically analyzed and reviewed by their peers.

There is an impressive number of examples that show how the greenhouse effect has intensified over the last 25 years, because of the spectacular acceleration of the industrialization process and the increase in the use of energy.

[*English*]

Let me cite only the example of Antarctica where in January 1995 a vast section the size of Prince Edward Island broke off from the Larsen-Shelf. Two months later a 60-kilometre long fissure appeared along the northern part of the same Larsen-Shelf, Scientific measurements show that the mean temperature in the Arctic peninsula has risen by nearly 20 degrees Fahrenheit over the last 20 years.

In the book *The Heat is On* by Ross Gelbspan, the author quotes Argentinian scientist Dr. Rodolfo del Valle as follows: "Recently we have seen rocks poke through the surface of the ice that had been buried under 600 metres of ice for 20,000 years". Sadly in spite of repeated commitments by industrialized countries of the north which have the means, both technological and financial, to stabilize and reduce excessive greenhouse emissions, the evidence shows a very different and a very sad tale. Emissions are not stabilized, let alone reduced, compared to 1990 totals. On the contrary, they have increased substantially.

• (2330)

In Canada in spite of categorical commitments by successive governments, our greenhouse gases have actually risen by 8% over 1990 results. In fact the UN climate change secretariat has reported that among developed nations the U.S., Japan and Canada were responsible for 85% of the increase in greenhouse gases between 1990 and 1995.

[*Translation*]

Yet, we are a rich and influential nation, a member of the G-7, a country whose natural resources are among the most abundant in the world, a country of knowledge and first-class technological achievements. We can and must do better.

[*English*]

If over the last five years India, a country far less favoured financially and technologically than our own, can invest some \$600 million Canadian in solar energy as well as make significant investments in waste recovery energy, in wind energy, in biomass energy and in district energy, surely we can do substantially more.

What we must do first of all is rebalance the economic and fiscal incentive and subsidy program which over the years and even today heavily favours the fossil fuel and nuclear industries. Unless we change our ways and direction toward energy efficiency and renewable energies, unless we have the courage and determination to redirect our subsidies and fiscal incentives toward environmentally clean energies, we will continue to move from conference to conference, not only spinning wheels but losing ground in the global battle to stabilize and reduce greenhouse emissions.

Over the last 20 years we have spent literally billions of dollars in subsidies and tax incentives to the fossil fuel and nuclear industries. In the oil and gas industry alone, according to figures from Natural Resources Canada for the year 1993, the value of tax deductions totalled a staggering \$6.247 billion.

With a determined co-ordinated program backed by adequate financial incentives, we can stabilize at 1990 levels by 2005 and reduce our emissions substantially by 2010, some reliable experts believe by as much as 10%.

We have not scratched the surface of what is possible and available: waste recovery energy, district energy, wind energy, solar energy, biomass energy, better public transportation and clean transportation fuels such as cellulose ethanol and of course energy efficiency.

What we need is a determination that turned the acid rain situation around in the eighties, when Canada took a bold leadership position including tight timelines and substantial reduction targets of 50% involving the federal government and seven of the affected provinces. Rather than worrying about lack of action by the United States, we took a bold lead and the U.S. eventually followed by amending its Clean Air Act.

Canada must continue its role as an international environmental leader regardless of the timid and pussyfooting positions of the U.S. Canada must continue to set an international example, for only when rich nations like our own set a convincing example will we in turn convince less favoured countries of the developing world to follow our lead.

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For besides being good for our environment and our health, clean energies are immensely beneficial to the economy, creating investments, creating wealth through advanced technologies and creating jobs.

I will describe one last example. Denmark now depending on coal for 50% of its energy has established a bold program to replace its total coal energy by wind power by 2030. Danish and German wind power turbines now provide energy not only in Europe but in Africa, Asia, North America and South America, to communities large and small. Why should these turbines not be Canadian?

Indeed climate change solutions, very far from being an economic burden, on the contrary are a sustainable economic opportunity. Let us be bold rather than timid. Let us lead rather than follow. Let us bet squarely on energies of the 21st century, renewable energies, clean energies. Let us bet on a clean and sustainable future for our children.

• (2335)

Mr. Lee Morrison (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I wish I had a couple of hours for a one on one debate with the hon. member for Lac-Saint-Louis. Since that is not possible I would like to address some of the misrepresentations, or perhaps I should say the omissions in his presentation wherein he was so selective about his choice of science and scientists.

I would commend him to Frederick Selz, president emeritus of Rockefeller University, chairman of the George C. Marshall Institute and a member of the IPCC who said, "I have never witnessed a more disturbing corruption of the peer review process than the events that led to the IPCC report". Of course he was referring to the 1966 report.

He and a group of fellow scientists went through line by line the original version of the IPCC report before it was butchered for political purposes. I would like to quote a few select lines from the report. Now these are not quoted in context and I am open to attack because of that. However, these are actual quotes from the report: "None of the studies cited has shown clear evidence that we can attribute changes to the specific cause of increases in greenhouse gases". That is a direct contradiction to the paragraph which appeared in the summary, which has been quoted by hon. members opposite at great length today.

The report continued: "No study to date has positively attributed all or part of observed climate change to anthropogenic causes". The report continued: "Any claims of positive detection of significant climate change are likely to remain controversial until uncertainties in the total variability of the climate system are reduced".

That does not give anybody great credit or anybody great discredit. What it does do is establish the fact which our leader mentioned earlier in the evening that there is not universal acclaim

within the scientific community for the theory of human induced global warming. It is a theory. It is an interesting theory. I find it very interesting, but I do not swallow it holus-bolus. I want to see more evidence.

Mr. Clifford Lincoln: Mr. Speaker, it is very interesting that the member quoted Frederick Selz.

I am going to refer to the book entitled "The Heat is On". The quote is from an article in the *Wall Street Journal*. Frederick Selz is a director of the Marshall institute. He castigated another scientist, Santer, for allegedly excising references to scientific uncertainty. He wrote: "I have never witnessed a more disturbing corruption of the peer review process than the events which led to this IPCC report", which is the quote the hon. member cited.

Several months later Seitz conceded the reports of his own Marshall institute which consistently denied that any threat to the global climate were not based on science but merely "represent opinion". So much for Selz. It was purely an opinion. He admits himself that it did not represent scientific fact.

If the hon. member would care to read "The Heat is On", all the references are there to the Marshall institute, to Selz, to Bolin, to the IPCC, to Michaels, Balling, Idso, Frederick Singer and Dr. Lindzen, who are all paid consultants of the trillion dollar oil and gas lobby, who would want us to believe that the world is not changing.

They would want us to believe, as tobacco scientists used to that tobacco does not cause cancer. They would want us to believe that the fish are not disappearing off the shores of Newfoundland. They would want us to wait until the world is a desert, until the seas have risen and the islands have gone. Then the Reform Party could do something but it will not be here any more, thank goodness.

[Translation]

Ms. Hélène Alarie (Louis-Hébert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to seek the unanimous consent of this House to share my allotted ten minutes with my colleague, the hon. member for Laurentides.

The Deputy Speaker: Does the House grant unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

• (2340)

Ms. Hélène Alarie: Mr. Speaker, the scientific community generally agrees that the phenomenal amounts of pollutants released into the atmosphere since the beginning of the industrial revolution are making the earth's temperature rise at an unprecedented rate.

The scientific commission mandated by governments worldwide demonstrated that the planet was warming and this was most

likely due to carbon dioxide emissions and other gasses produced by burning fossil fuels as well as the destruction of forests.

Scientists are sending a warning about the consequences of global warming, one of which could be the rising of the sea level by nearly one metre. In Quebec, the St. Lawrence River would be the hardest hit, as its flow would be substantially reduced. Other examples could include more droughts—more land will turn into desert—, more hurricanes, the spread of famine and disease, vanishing forests and animal species becoming extinct. Without being alarmists, these researchers foresee disastrous consequences.

According to scientific forecasts, temperatures could rise by anywhere from 2 to 6 degrees Celsius in Quebec over the next century, which is the most dramatic climate change since the end of the last ice age.

The Minister of the Environment corroborates these statements with her statement that this climate change might impact upon our natural resources, including forests, water, fisheries, agriculture and a number of other sectors. Yet this government is suffering from an unprecedented inertia when it comes to the positions taken at the earth summit.

During the 1992 earth summit, the world governments agreed to bring their greenhouse gas emissions back down to 1990 levels by the year 2000. Yet only a rare few have made an effort to keep that promise. The Liberal government is, in fact, living proof of this, with its inertia and its slowness in taking a position in preparation for the Kyoto conference which is about to start. The Bloc Québécois is asking the government to shoulder its responsibilities.

With her lack of leadership at the Regina meeting, the Minister of the Environment, by signing the final communique, is in danger of jeopardizing Canada's environmental credibility in the eyes of the international community. This agreement backs off from the commitments made at Rio and proves how easy it is to let oneself be intimidated by a sector of Canadian industry, the fossil fuel sector.

No one in this House has any doubt that the time has come to take preventive measures in light of the possibility of climate change. It is vital that the industrialized countries adopt very stringent objectives at Kyoto. Quebec, through its Minister of the Environment, has dissociated itself from the Regina agreement and by taking a firm position has demonstrated that it was possible in America to attain the objectives set for the year 2000. As for the federal government, however, it has demonstrated nothing except the weakness of its position.

It is vital that the objectives be higher than those of the United States and even Japan and that the objectives set at the Kyoto conference be ratified by all provinces of Canada. Let us not forget

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that only Quebec and British Columbia ratified the Rio agreement in 1992. A province such as Alberta, which produces more than a quarter of the greenhouse gases, cannot remain recalcitrant.

Greenhouse gases are a threat to humanity. Canada, excluding Quebec, came up with no project in response to the commitments made at the Rio summit. In fact, emissions of carbon dioxide, methane and others increased by 13% this year.

We know the position of the Quebec government, environmental groups and all the countries participating in the Kyoto conference, but we still do not know the position of the federal Minister of the Environment.

Is it too late for the government to do its homework? We cannot accept mere wishful thinking. Too many young people are expecting us to preserve their planet.

• (2345)

Mrs. Monique Guay (Laurentides, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the inexplicable about-face of this government in the greenhouse gas issue is unbelievable.

The problem of greenhouse gases is not a new one. When I was environment critic, I rose on several occasions in the House to warn the Liberal government about the dangers of greenhouse gases. But apparently the minister back then and the one we have now seem to have been chronically deaf because nothing has been done. On the contrary, things are going from bad to worse.

I would like to remind the Minister of the Environment, in case she has forgotten, that the Kyoto conference in Japan takes place from December 1 to 12, five days from now, and that Canada is still the only G-7 country with no specific position on the greenhouse gas issue.

In addition, in case the minister has forgotten this as well, the purpose of the conference is to review the situation of greenhouse gas emissions with respect to what was agreed in Rio in 1992, in addition to adopting new objectives for the reduction of greenhouse gases, accompanied by short term, 2005, and medium term, 2010, legal controls.

At the Rio summit in 1992, 154 countries, including Canada, signed the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, thereby undertaking to stabilize greenhouse gas emissions at their 1990 level by the year 2000.

At that time, Canada was considered a leader and a hero in this area, but today it is a real zero on that score. Even Canada's ambassador for the environment, John Fraser, expressed harsh criticism, and rightly so, against the government and its policies on greenhouse gases, which he described as lacking in commitment and leadership.

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In fact, Canada's performance is disastrous. By the year 2000, Canada will have increased its greenhouse gas emissions by 13%. How can this be when the Liberal government committed in Rio to stabilize its emissions during this decade and then to reduce them gradually? What we see is the exact opposite.

What the Department of the Environment does not seem to realize is that greenhouse gases destroy not only our environment, but also our economy and our social fabric.

The minister should stop catering to cabinet and to the Alberta oil lobby, she should finally get her act together and adopt a responsible, firm and clear position.

Being penny-wise and pound-foolish to help oil companies save money by not taking drastic steps to eliminate greenhouse gases will undoubtedly cost us dearly in the future. The minister should consider the tremendous economic losses that thousands of companies would suffer because of climate change, not to mention all the health and environmental costs.

Furthermore, the minister should consider the economic benefits of more energy-efficient technologies. In relation to this, there is in my riding a very innovative and imaginative organization called CEVEQ, which specializes in assessing the compatibility of electric vehicles marketed with government standards.

This is a concrete example of where the federal government should be investing our taxes in order to reduce greenhouse gases. But obviously, the Liberal government prefers and considers it better to bow to the wishes of the oil companies that are polluting and endangering the lives of the people in Quebec and in Canada.

While we are still waiting for a clear position from the Minister of the Environment, the other countries have already announced their position on greenhouse gases for the Kyoto summit.

I invite the Minister of the Environment to read the Bloc Quebecois' position on reducing greenhouse gases. Contrary to the government opposite, the Bloc Quebecois takes the issue of greenhouse gases very seriously.

I urge the Minister of the Environment, out of respect for Quebecers, for Canadians and for the young people who will be building tomorrow's world, to assume her responsibilities immediately in the area of greenhouse gases, in order to ensure for future generations the quality of life and the prosperity they have a right to expect.

• (2350)

[English]

Mr. Rick Laliberte (Churchill River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would just like to ask a question and perhaps seek support for a position a fellow member raised earlier. Members on the govern-

ment side did not answer him. I ask the member for Laurentides to speak on the perspective of a national transportation strategy.

Rail transportation is a low emitter. A big issue for transportation is public freight and people who travel from one end of the country to the other. Our country was built on rail. Bullet trains are used elsewhere in the world. These trains could be used from Quebec City to Toronto. Maybe a Bombardier, using Canadian technology, could build an electric train that could travel at 300 kilometres per hour.

What kind of support would we get from the Bloc concerning a national transportation strategy to look at low emission transportation?

[Translation]

Mrs. Monique Guay: Mr. Speaker, naturally, for us in Quebec and in the Bloc Quebecois, rail transportation is a non-polluting alternative and, as such, should be used more. Except that we note that this government is dismantling any rail transportation system we may have had. So, there is one side of the issue that does not sound right.

I referred earlier to the electric car as being another mode of transportation. We cannot rely on ethanol to save our environment. We have a technology, the electric car, that is currently under development. The mayor in my riding has been driving around in an electric car for more than two years, and it is very efficient.

Instead of investing haphazardly, the government should invest in areas where there are opportunities, and have a vision for a change. These investments will require time and research, but at least the end result will be products that will be useful, while preventing pollution in our country and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

So, yes, with respect to rail transportation, the government will have to invest in that area instead of dismantling the existing system. Perhaps an analysis should also be made to ensure that this system can be developed across the country and in Quebec.

[English]

Mr. Roy Cullen (Etobicoke North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to have the opportunity to contribute to this important debate on greenhouse gases and climate change.

I am one who believes that greenhouse gases are a threat to our planet. The balance of probabilities indicates that we should be taking action. The risk of inaction is just too great. We really cannot put this problem off into the future. We have to deal with it now.

The questions for me are how we improve our environmental performance with respect to greenhouse gases, at what pace we proceed, and how we implement these policies without negatively impacting our industries and our competitive position.

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Reducing greenhouse gases is a very complex global issue. It involves matters of public policy. It involves matters of scientific and technical research. It is a very politically charged issue as well.

As with most issues of public policy we would generally ask the following questions. If we make a public policy change who loses and who wins? Are there winners and losers? Is it a win-win or is it a lose-lose situation?

If we look at the question of climate change and greenhouse gases we clearly cannot measure all the benefits. Nor should we try. We cannot really deal adequately with the benefits of a climate that is more stable, that minimizes the frequency and the severity of natural disasters, and that avoids the severe impacts on agriculture and other negative consequences of dislocation which climate change can cause.

These are some of the benefits of addressing climate change but there are other benefits as well. One that has been brought to the attention of our natural resource committee relates to insurance costs. Insurance premiums that cover natural disasters are getting to be totally out of hand and quite unaffordable. If we do not deal with greenhouse gases insurance premiums will become astronomically high and force our businesses and taxpayers generally to deal with a very difficult problem.

• (2355)

There are benefits such as that but some have argued there are other benefits. If we deal with climate change we will create a large movement in technology development.

The argument which has been repeated in the House goes something like this. If we set aggressive targets for greenhouse gases new technologies will help us reach our goals. The argument continues with the thought that as these technologies develop in Canada new industries and new export possibilities will be created. We will be able to sell and license these environmental technologies abroad.

I have oversimplified the argument but basically that is the essence of it. I hope it comes true. I am sure a lot of this will happen.

We should also ask ourselves what happens if these technologies do not materialize. What happens if they do not meet the test of being commercially viable? We need to contemplate these possibilities as we negotiate greenhouse gas emissions. We need to have a fallback position. We should only bet on those technologies that are proven today and have been demonstrated to have commercial viability.

At the same time we can do a better job of removing obstacles and creating the right policy and tax environment, favouring the development and commercialization of environmental technolo-

gies. The agreements we reach in Kyoto must be achievable. We know from the Rio experience that targets must be realistic and achievable. To do this in Canada we need to do a few things.

First, we need to agree on realistic targets. Second, we need to obtain the commitment of all stakeholders, and that includes all Canadians, to achieve these goals. Third, we need to provide and refine economic instruments to create the right incentives and the right market signals to industry to improve our greenhouse gas reduction performance.

The economic instruments referred to are generally classified in two broad areas, non-tax instruments and tax instruments. In the area of non-tax instruments we have heard a lot about tradable permits for emissions trading.

Although it is a complex issue it boils down to a very simple scenario if we assume we have a certain jurisdiction, oversimplify it and make it hypothetical. There are two plants, two factories, and to reach certain greenhouse gas targets those plants together are allowed, say, 1,000 units of emissions. One plant is allocated 500 units and the other plant another 500 units of emissions. One plant is able to achieve the target, in fact exceed it and perhaps reduce it to 300 units of emissions. The other plant is having difficulty with achieving the 500 units and will be over by 200 units.

What happens is that the plant that will be over buys the surplus capacity the other plant will not utilize to meet the reduction targets. There is a consideration. One plant pays the other to buy its unused emissions target. This places a market value or opportunity cost on the cost of not being able to comply with the emissions targets.

It has some interesting possibilities. Although it is not a long term solution it provides some phasing of the problem. It allows companies and other creators of greenhouse gases some opportunities to step up to the issue.

We do not have much experience with tradable permits. The United States has some. We really do not have a lot of experience to draw on. It is something we should be looking at and seriously considering. Whether we could apply emissions trading on a global context is more of a challenge.

• (2400)

I am not sure it is workable in the short run, but it is something that perhaps is a target to look at. I mention that as one non-tax instrument. There are others. There are voluntary measures.

I am not sure over the last number of years that voluntary measures, unfortunately, have really done the job. I say unfortunately because I know there are many companies that have worked very hard at improving their environmental performance with greenhouse gases.

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I can think, for example, of the industry that I came from, the forest industry, the pulp and paper industry. If we look at the greenhouse gas emissions in 1995 for the Canadian pulp and paper industry, they have been reduced by 20% from 1990. That is at a time when the production increased by a similar amount, 20%. Those were through voluntary measures.

I can look at my own riding of Etobicoke North where I have Bayer, the pharmaceutical company, BASF Canada and Parker Amchem, large chemical and pharmaceutical manufacturers which have really put a great effort into voluntary measures and have achieved some significant reductions in their emissions.

I would hope that voluntary measures will be part of the solution because there are some sectors and some companies that are working very hard to reduce their emissions.

If we look at other non-tax instruments, there are concepts like user charges for water supply, disposal charges or deposit refund schemes. There is a myriad of non-tax instruments that could be embellished and expanded.

If we look at tax instruments, we could look at accelerating depreciation allowances for environmental investments, for example, waste heat recovery. We waste a lot of heat.

There are a number of other tax instruments, but to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in Canada, we must recognize some important facts. Twenty-seven per cent of greenhouse gases originate in the transportation sector.

Secondly, if we adopt a policy of business as usual with respect to greenhouse gases, greenhouse gases will increase by 36.1% over 1990 levels by the year 2020.

We have seen this debate pitched as an Alberta oil patch issue versus the rest of Canada. In fact, that is not the case. The greenhouse gas producers in the next number of years will be British Columbia, Ontario and other provinces like Quebec, the Atlantic region and Saskatchewan.

To reach our goal, all Canadians will have to contribute. The end result will be worth it but it will involve a huge commitment by all Canadians. I think the goal will be worth it. I look forward to continuing discussion on this important topic.

Mr. David Chatters (Athabasca, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate much of what the member says. I agree with much of it but this concept of tradable emission permits or credits is an interesting theory until you start to really examine it.

The government member from Ottawa West—Nepean raised the concern that if they start down that road, it will very soon become much like the dairy quotas in Canada. These permits become more

and more expensive and fall into the hands of fewer and fewer corporations and companies.

It seems to me that it quickly becomes unworkable or a real hindrance to free economic activity. When you take the scenario even just a little further and start talking about the worker who has to commute into town to work every day and does not have access to public transit and has to use his automobile, does he then need to trade emission credits with the little old lady who just drives her car to church on Sunday?

It just becomes in my view unmanageable. How would the member see that system working?

Mr. Roy Cullen: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question from the member opposite. With emissions trading, the experience we have as I mentioned is quite limited. When they get to the micro, micro level of individuals, clearly it is not workable, no.

• (2405)

I think it has some potential if you are looking at a transition phase where you have different regions or different contributors to greenhouse gases. What it does is it puts a market price on the result of not meeting certain targets. If those permits become concentrated in the hands of a few and the price goes up, the entity that is producing the greenhouse gas emissions faces a higher cost. The economics start to move more toward taking the measures that will be necessary to meet their own target.

The market pressures are reasonable. It has some practical challenges to fully implement, certainly on a global basis, and even implementing it here in Canada, but it would provide some transitional relief and it is something we should try.

Mr. Joe Jordan (Leeds—Grenville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member makes an interesting point. I would like to congratulate him by pointing out that we should not point fingers at regions of the country. Very clearly, this is an issue for all Canadians and the solutions and the benefits of solving this problem are going to be realized by all Canadians. Acceptable and workable solution strategies will have to very clearly recognize that particular point.

The member talked about the commercial viability of adjusting technologies and he touched very briefly in the area of cogeneration. Does he see cogeneration as a commercially viable option?

Mr. Roy Cullen: Mr. Speaker, I welcome the question.

I did not have a chance to deal at any length on cogeneration. In my view, it is an opportunity that we should look at, particularly right now in the context of Ontario where we have some nuclear capacity that is not in use and there are questions around reinvesting in that nuclear capacity.

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I know from my experience in the natural resource sector that there are huge opportunities to use cogeneration as a competitive tool to be more competitive with the United States and other jurisdictions. It also has a huge environmental impact.

In the forest industry, for example, you are using biomass, wood waste. If you set up an electrical generating plant, you can fuel your own plant through wood waste biomass which really does not create very much of a problem in terms of greenhouse gases. Usually they build a capacity so there is some excess electricity. You sell that to the grid, Ontario Hydro. You are selling electricity at the margin.

The problem with electrical generation capacity and nuclear capacity is the huge capital cost of those plants and that translates, of course, into the cost of energy or electricity. I think there is a unique opportunity in Ontario right now, instead of ramping up this nuclear capacity, to look at cogeneration as a reasonable alternative.

As more cogeneration comes onstream, you are avoiding some of those huge capital investments. You are getting electricity at a marginal cost and cheaper electricity for the plants that are producing it. You are creating some competitive advantage for some of the companies that exist in Ontario now.

Mr. Rick Casson (Lethbridge, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, we should note that it is now November 27, Thursday, and there are only nine days left between now and Kyoto.

This government has once again withheld vital information and refused to be held accountable for the position going into Kyoto. Industrialists and environmentalists alike are puzzled by this government's lack of leadership, openness and lack of consultation as it crams together a last minute position for Kyoto.

I can hardly believe, with Kyoto just a few days away, and one less now, that we are still in the dark about Canada's position. It is no wonder that public skepticism about government accountability is at an all time high.

This government reminds me somewhat of a disinterested student who rarely attends class and even when he is there, he never bothers to listen to what is being discussed until the night before the final exam when he begins to panic, wishing he had paid attention and desperately crams, trying to understand principles in the hope of scraping together a passing grade.

This government has had years to formally consult the public, environmentalists, industrialists and their provincial and municipal counterparts. But no, they decided to sit on their legally binding protocol and do nothing. From the onset, this process or lack thereof has been marred by the absence of leadership, a lack of meaningful dialogue and, most importantly, an infuriating lack of openness and consultation.

• (2410)

The government's refusal to get together and develop workable targets for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions leads me to several conclusions. It never took its responsibility seriously or the government shuns accountability and it has something to hide.

Really, to present a position at an international forum without having reached consensus in the domestic arena is a recipe for conflict. It is an affront to Canadians that the government was not confident enough to sell this agreement at home, but is willing to take a secret agreement to Kyoto for the rest of the world to see.

Perhaps it would fare the government well to brush up on environmental diplomacy and maybe start relearning what it means to negotiate effective global agreements. Strategies to deal with the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions must be developed with input from representatives of all levels of government, while balancing public, environmental and industrial concerns.

This government is hypocritical in its approach to environmental strategies. Why even bother to entertain the concept of environmental harmonization if in reality there is no intention of using provincial consensus for the really big issues like signing international agreements?

This government had ample opportunity in the last four years of governing to learn from the mistakes made by the Mulroney government when it signed a deal in Rio without even thinking through the method of implementation.

Those targets have come and gone with absolutely no progress being made and still the same mistakes are repeated. Evidently, issues such as consensus and feedback are not priorities with this government. If the government has not yet even hammered out realistic and achievable targets, I will presume that it has failed to work out an implementation strategy.

The tremendous responsibility associated with signing a legally binding protocol in an international forum necessitates an incredible amount of consultation, research and planning. If the government had done its homework, it would have been able to answer such crucial questions as how much the implementation of said targets will cost.

The Conference Board of Canada in its comparative review of the economic impact of greenhouse gas reductions on Canada estimates that reducing CO₂ to 1990 levels will cost the average Canadian family of four between \$2,000 and \$3,200 each year and those estimates will be much higher in Alberta.

The Minister of the Environment has already told Canadians that this agreement will cost them money. However, Canadians still do not know what form these costs will take.

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For the past eight years J. Allen Coombs, now retired chief of International Energy Markets and Environmental Emissions of Natural Resources Canada, worked on the stabilization of emissions to 1990 levels, stating that it would be virtually impossible. Canadians deserved answers months and months ago. Now, as time runs out, Canadians are more concerned than ever that this government has refused to protect their pocketbooks from arbitrary and Liberal closed door decision making.

Weeks ago President Bill Clinton put the American position out for all to see. The American government is firm on the fact that it will not participate in an agreement unless developing countries sign on, but the Liberal government remains silent. Canadian provinces have agreed that Canada should not sign on unless the majority of countries responsible for greenhouse gas emissions sign on. But the government's silence continues.

If developing countries that are responsible for 40% of the world's emissions are not participating, will the Canadian government still take part despite the lack of a level playing field?

Let me remind the government that in the next 15 years it is estimated that developing countries will be responsible for 60% of the world's emissions. Without the participation of the main players, global benefits of pollution reduction will not be achieved.

Canadians deserve to know what means of pollution reduction have been studied, whether or not voluntary incentives will be utilized or if a tax increase is the only option this government will consider.

I strongly urge the government to consider voluntary industrial incentives and for it to encourage Canadian companies to make environmental modifications within their companies.

Canadians are desperate to know just what the government has considered, what it intends to present and what it is willing to sign and under what preconditions.

• (2415)

The Liberal government has had ample opportunity to promote responsible energy development principles and maximize voluntary efforts within industry but chooses instead to do nothing.

Has the government decided that the co-operation and support of Canadians upon entering a legally binding protocol is no longer an issue? Has this government even got support from its own cabinet? Over the last few months contradiction after contradiction has emerged from the government side of the House.

For instance on November 12 in a last minute effort to appear diplomatic, the Minister of the Environment met with her provincial counterparts and a provincial accord was reached targeting 1990 levels by the year 2010. At first this seemed like a

breakthrough until of course the Prime Minister hastily brushed it aside and made it clear he is more interested in beating out the American position and that he feels no obligation to stick to the provincial agreement.

This government refuses to co-operate with Canadians on all fronts. It has refused to engage in an open and meaningful democratic dialogue.

In conclusion, the position to be tabled in Kyoto on December 1 will be the product of closed backroom politics. Unfortunately Canadians will likely pay the price for this government's lack of democratic consultation.

Mr. Joe Jordan (Leeds—Grenville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will preface my question by saying that I am in the back row over here and the hon. member is in the back row over there and we really did not have much to do with the Kyoto process. So let us take that out of the loop. Let us pretend Kyoto is not going to happen.

I am curious as to what the hon. member thinks independent of that process. I agree that the correlation between what happens there and the reduction of greenhouse gases is a subject of debate. So let us take that out of the way.

What course of action in very general terms does the hon. member think Canada should take just to handle the problem independent of the Kyoto process because I realize it is a bone of contention.

Mr. Rick Casson: Mr. Speaker, we have to keep in context the size of the problem. Canada puts out 2% of the world's emissions. Since 1990 that has grown only by 8%. It was thought it would be 13% but it has been reduced. There have been programs implemented and voluntary moves by industry.

I would like to see municipal governments more involved to get down to the grassroots people and education of our young people. We only have to look at what we are doing with recycling. The hon. member referred earlier to a couple of *rs*. What happened there? Everybody in this country recycles because we trained our children. If we start education with voluntary programs there is lots that can be done.

The thing we are worried about and the thing we wish would have been put to rest a long time ago by this government is the fact that we do not have a \$4 billion solution to a \$1 million problem. We have to make sure the reaction we come up with to this problem is somewhere close to the problem that it is intended to solve.

Mrs. Karen Kraft Sloan (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to draw the House's attention to the fact that while Canada emits 2% of the world's total greenhouse gases, we are also the ninth largest emitter and we are ranked second in our emissions per capita.

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This is a very serious problem and it is a serious problem for all Canadians to engage in. I am very curious to understand where these \$4 billion costs are coming from. The hon. member sits on the same committee that I do. When we were sitting on that committee we received representation from a witness who told us that by a very modest investment of around \$16 million from NRCan they were able to undertake energy efficiency and conservation initiatives that saved the Canadian economy \$4 billion in energy costs.

I do not think this is such a terrible thing and I do not think members of the House would agree that this was such a terrible thing to do.

• (2420)

There are many no regrets sorts of things we can do to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. My hon. colleague who is a medical doctor spoke earlier in the House. She talked about the severe medical problems that might befall Canadians if we do nothing on this file as the member opposite suggested because he was concerned about some mythological \$4 billion cost. I am not sure where that figure comes from.

I wonder what the cost would be to the health system let alone the cost of illness in one's family or losing a loved one. Those are costs that cannot be quantified. Does the hon. member not think it is a good idea to implement a no regret strategy for investing in energy efficiency where we can begin to increase that \$4 billion saving?

Mr. Rick Casson: Mr. Speaker, some of the ideas we have heard tonight from the government side of the House are the kinds of things we have been asking for during the past three or four months. What are the types of programs we are going to have in place? What are we going to do? What is the government proposing to be done to meet these emissions reductions?

Any voluntary action that can be made to reduce emissions would be tremendous. My comparison of spending \$4 billion to solve a \$1 million problem was just a comparison. It was not right. Let us not spend a huge amount of money to solve a small problem unless we can prove that the problem needs those kinds of funds to take care of it.

Mr. David Pratt (Nepean—Carleton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as a member of the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development and as the member of Parliament for Nepean—Carleton, I am very pleased to rise in the House to speak on the issue of climate change.

We hear a lot about this issue these days with the United Nations framework convention on climate change in Kyoto, Japan that is approaching this December. Much attention has been focused on

the implications of climate change not just in Canada but certainly around the world.

Environment ministers from around the globe will meet in Kyoto to try to deal with this issue and take steps toward a solution. The eyes of many in the international community are upon Canada as the conference in Kyoto approaches. The world looks to Canada for leadership and it is leadership that we must and I believe will demonstrate at Kyoto.

The Prime Minister and the Minister of the Environment have stated that they are committed to working together with partners across Canada including other governments, non-profit organizations and the business community to seek creative solutions to this problem. I sincerely applaud their efforts and their commitment and I wish them Godspeed.

At the United Nations earth summit in 1992 many countries including Canada promised to stabilize greenhouse gas emissions at 1990 levels by the year 2000. Rather than contributing to a solution however our country and others have had a less than impressive record. While Canada is not the largest polluter overall, we have the second highest rate of greenhouse gas emissions per person on the planet. Canada along with Japan and the United States are responsible for the lion's share of greenhouse gas increases between 1990 and 1995.

Wherever you live in Canada, whether it is in Placentia Bay, Newfoundland, Nepean, Ontario, Brandon, Manitoba or Whitehorse, Yukon, you should be concerned about global warming. According to the "Canada Country Study: Climate Impacts and Adaptation" by the federal environment department, in my own province of Ontario average annual warming of 3°C to 8°C felt especially during the winter months can be anticipated by the latter part of the 21st century. As this warming progresses, Ontarians could be subjected to increased frequencies of extreme weather events such as severe thunderstorms and tornadoes or even long summer droughts as a result of global warming.

As Liberals we are not going to try to evade our environmental responsibilities as the Reform Party is attempting to do with its faulty science theory. We know what our responsibilities are to future generations of Canadians and we are going to face them head on. This Liberal government is committed to endorsing emission targets that can be realistically achieved on a step by step basis.

• (2425)

I believe an effective strategy in the global response to climate change must involve all levels of government, federal, provincial, and I put special emphasis on municipal governments because they are without question the level of government that is closest to the people.

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To make such change happen throughout the country, we must look to individual communities for ways to enhance energy conservation, reduce energy efficiencies and improve our environmental record.

How do we as Canadians begin this process? First, because it is obvious that human activity causes climate change, I believe simple and even small changes in our own behaviour can help alleviate this problem.

We all remember not so long ago the concept of recycling and how it was the furthest thing from our minds. Yet the vast majority of Canadians now recycle newspapers, cans, glass and plastic products without giving it a second thought.

We need to look to other aspects of our daily lives and rethink some of the ways we conduct our lives, do business and travel from destination to destination.

Addressing the issue of climate change means doing things smarter and in many cases saving money in the process. We must remember that there are many benefits to a cleaner environment: improved air quality, better environmental health, increased efficiency and I would venture to say as well increased national competitiveness.

While the agents of the status quo, the Reform Party, paint a doom and gloom scenario about the aftermath of Kyoto, the reality of improving energy efficiency and reducing waste is much more positive. One thing that is also evident in terms of Canada's response to Kyoto is that there is no one magic solution which we can rely upon to deal with the problem. In my view it will take a wide range of creative individual measures which are targeted to reduce our emissions in specific ways.

Let us look at one particular aspect of the problem, transportation. It is estimated that the transport sector is responsible for almost 27% of total greenhouse gas emissions in Canada and that this number may grow even larger.

One issue which I believe the government must address on a national basis is that of declining public transit ridership. This is an area where I feel some substantial progress on our emissions could be made in a relatively painless manner. How do we do this?

Speaking as a former municipal representative and transit commissioner here in Ottawa, I believe we can and should use our tax system to get people out of their cars and into public transit. Nine tonnes of pollutants a year are saved by just one busload of passengers. That is why taking public transit is a key step in taking solid action on climate change.

A recent study by the Victoria Transport Policy Institute called "Employer Provided Transit Passes—A Tax Exempt Benefit" argues very convincingly that making employer contributions to

transit passes tax exempt would help to improve the cost competitiveness of public transit in relation to the private automobile.

The study notes that the average commuter who owns an automobile and receives free tax exempt parking at the worksite pays approximately the same to drive as to ride a bus. The value of free or subsidized parking to employees is calculated at approximately \$1,772 in average pretax income for each employee. This includes \$1,200 in direct costs and \$512 in tax exemptions.

The study also observes that while Revenue Canada ostensibly collects taxes on parking benefits, it also provides exemptions for which the majority of employees qualify. Therefore from a policy standpoint the existing tax rules favour the private automobile over public transit, inefficient over efficient travel modes, and the economically more advantaged auto driver over the economically more disadvantaged transit rider. Surely this policy area needs re-examination.

I am not the only one who believes that this type of measure could yield some significant benefits. A number of my colleagues and several organizations have thrown their support behind the transit benefit tax exemption proposal, including the Canadian Urban Transit Association, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, the Transportation Association of Canada, our own House of Commons Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development and the National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy.

So far, the federal government's response to this proposal has been cautious as one might expect. Both the Department of Finance and Revenue Canada initially opposed the idea of tax exempt transit passes citing lost revenues and insignificant reductions in automobile transit.

● (2430)

In a 1995 letter to the Canadian Urban Transit Association the finance department estimated this initiative would cause lost revenue of \$140 million or \$2,550 for each new transit user.

However, according to the Victoria Transport Policy Institute, experience in the United States where this type of tax break has been available for 10 years suggests that our federal government may be grossly overestimating potential lost revenues.

The initial government analysis assumes that transit benefits would be available to 50% of all transit riding employees, but the American experience indicates that less than 10% of employers provide such subsidies. However, where such benefits are available, reductions of auto commuting of 10% to 30% are possible.

Based on a request made at the environment committee the Department of Finance is currently reviewing the proposal and is taking a closer look at the benefits and logistics of this initiative. I sincerely hope the department gives this more than a cursory examination.

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Those of us involved in this initiative realize that results cannot be expected overnight. However, as coverage of transit tax exemption is gradually extended to more and more employees, the benefits in terms of reductions in traffic congestion, greenhouse gas emissions, energy consumption, road and parking costs, and traffic accidents can be significant.

To sum up, the benefits add up to an improved urban environment, lower costs and a better quality of life for all Canadians.

There are many other areas such as district energy where the potential for energy efficiency cost savings and emission reductions are also significant. Hopefully I will have the opportunity to address some of those subjects at a later date.

Mr. Lee Morrison (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, in his presentation the hon. member made reference to an average annual warming of 3° to 8°C. He probably misspoke himself and meant 3° to 8°C by the year 2050. Even that comes from a 12 year old computer model which has long since been discredited even by global warming enthusiasts. A computer model can be made to give an infinite number of results. The present global warming dogma now puts 3°C by about 2050 at the top end.

That being said, I am wondering if the hon. member is familiar with the work of Drs. Christy and Spencer, a climatologist and an astrophysicist, who for the last 17 years have been measuring the temperature of the earth's atmosphere on a continuous basis with satellite based microwave sounding units. These are real measurements, real science, not computer models. They have discovered that for the last 17 years at least the warming trend we are supposed to be so afraid of appears to be on hold and that there has actually been a very slight cooling.

This is probably of no statistical significance. Nevertheless, it flies in the face of the conventional wisdom which says we are well on the way to being fried off the surface of the planet.

Guess what? Theorists who compose these computer models actually had the temerity to say that the results of these scientific measurements could not be right because they did not reflect the predictions made in the computer models.

Is the hon. member familiar with the program and could he comment on it?

Mr. David Pratt: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Lac-Saint-Louis certainly addressed some of the scientific issues, but it is clear that parts of the planet are cooling and parts are warming. However on balance the warming effect is very clear. The vast majority of the scientific community would certainly agree with that analysis.

• (2435)

As a general principle we as elected representatives have a responsibility to address issues with the best possible information we have available. The government is certainly attempting to do that. The initiatives that will flow from Kyoto will make a lot of sense not just from an environmental standpoint but from an economic standpoint in terms of reducing waste and enhancing our cost competitiveness. We can expect a lot of very beneficial things coming out of Kyoto.

I have to categorically reject the suggestion that somehow or other the science is not clear on this issue. The debate this evening has pointed out the problem with the Reform Party's analysis. Everyone in the House is virtually agreed but the Reform Party.

In terms of the average Canadian and how they would look upon this debate, the average Canadian would have to come to the conclusion that perhaps the other parties seem to have something and the Reform Party seems to be a bit off base on this issue. That is unfortunate. In terms of the committee's work over the course of the last month or so the testimony has been very clear and rather conclusive.

Mr. Lee Morrison (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, if we repeat something loud enough and often enough eventually it becomes an accepted dogma or universal truth.

I would like to begin by referring to a polemic statement written a little more than two decades ago. It indicated that it was cold fact global cooling presented humankind with the most important social, political and adaptive challenge we have had to deal with for 10,000 years, and that our stake in the decisions we make concerning it is of ultimate importance to the survival of ourselves, our children and our species.

If one merely substitutes the word warming for cooling, the statement could readily have been made by an exponent of the doomsday scenario of human induced climatic disaster today.

This cooling statement was made during a period when the media and the public were much more skeptical and generally better informed with respect to science than they are today.

During this new ice age scare—and I am sure there are people in this room who remember it clearly—there was no expectation that humankind could favourably alter climatic events by, for example, firing up their automobiles full tilt and injecting more carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. Proposed actions were not remedial but they were more rationally protective and adaptive. The scare died out and in due course the dogma of global warming became fashionable.

The second major difference between then and now is that informed debate about the merits of the cooling theory was possible. We did not yet have an entire generation of adults who had passed through the educational system with virtually no

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exposure to any type of scientific training. Today scholarly dissent is scorned. Scientists including many eminent climatologists who dare to question the popular doctrine are branded as thoughtless, uncaring enemies of the public good or tools of vested interests.

The members from Lac St. Louis and Davenport and the leader of the third party excelled themselves this evening in invective and ad hominem attacks on anyone who dared to disagree with the popular dogma. That indicates a certain weakness in their arguments. If you cannot win it with rationale arguments, you win it by shouting louder and calling the Leader of the Opposition names. It always works.

• (2440)

The scientific method of investigation has been almost casually rejected. Solid empirical temperature data have actually be disputed, as I mentioned a few moments ago, on the basis of mere computer modelling. The modellers have won the battle for public acceptance of their theories. Such is the state of scholarship near the end of the 20th century.

On the basis of computer generated temperature projections which reflect the preconceptions of the people making them, proponents of the theory of anthropogenic global warming are predicting natural disasters which would make much of this planet uninhabitable.

The minister who is technologically and scientifically challenged has yet to issue a news release predicting that the skies will turn to buttermilk, but I am expecting to hear something like that from her any day now.

Climate is a cyclical phenomenon. It always has been and always will be. Let us consider, for example, the little ice age which afflicted the northern hemisphere from about 1350 to the early 1880s. At its coldest during the late 17th century many thousands of European peasants died from exposure to the cold or starved because of crop failures brought on by this terrible climate change.

We have had since the end of the little ice age an average temperature rise of between half a degree and one degree centigrade. That is in the last 150 years. I submit that is normal, predictable and reasonable in a cyclical system. It is a rebound toward but not yet up to long term averages. Temperature measurements 150 years ago were pretty spotty, but I accept the proposition that the world is slightly warmer now than it was then.

I also accept the absolutely solid data collected by Drs. Christy and Spencer. They are not local data. They are data for the whole planet. These satellites are in different positions every second and the measurements are being taken constantly. The measurements have been checked wherever they were able to get a juxtaposition

of one of their readings with a reading from a radiosonde instrument, and the checks are perfect.

This is true science. First you come up with a theory. Then you do the experiment. Then you decide if the theory is correct. The global warmers have put it backward. They came up with the theory, say that it is true, and then reject any experimental data which contradict their preconceptions.

I spoke about the cycles of climate. I would like to mention a couple of them with which I have some personal familiarity. These things have been going on forever. I have examined mining operations dating from early Islamic times in North Africa and on the Arabian peninsula. That would be 950 AD or thereabouts.

Very obviously, from the debris around these places, the people who ran the operations had abundant water and abundant timber. Now these areas are deserts. They have been deep deserts for hundreds and hundreds of years. It did not happen due to any human activity. There were not large numbers of humans on earth in those days. What they did as far as contributing emissions to the atmosphere was perhaps to build a few campfires. Yet there were these drastic climatic changes.

When the Vikings came to southern Greenland they found a climate much similar to the climate in northern Scotland right now.

• (2445)

They built their settlements and these settlements disappeared during the little ice age when they were overridden by the glaciers. Now the glaciers are in retreat because we do have this slight warming trend coming out of the little ice age and the old settlements, the old stone walls, are reappearing. They are an archaeological treasure.

Nothing is static on this earth and nothing that petty little man can do is going to make a major difference in the vastness of space. Sure, we can mess up the earth where we can see it, touch it and smell it. We can destroy our personal, immediate environment but we cannot destroy the climate of the earth or change the climate of the earth any more than we can do like King Canute and bid the tide not to come in.

It did not work for him and it will not work for us. This is not science. The IPCC is not, as the hon. members, now absent have, attempted to tell us, a monolithic organization. It has very large divergences of opinion within the body.

There is actually a divergence between the climatologists and environmental people on one side and the non-experts, the mathematicians, the computer wonks, the chemists, the biologists on the other side.

To be cruel, one might say perhaps the division within the IPCC is between those who are experts in this field and those who are not.

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The Deputy Speaker: I hate to be cruel, too, but the hon. member's time, I am afraid, has expired.

Mrs. Michelle Dockrill (Bras d'Or, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my question to the hon. member is very simple. China agrees with the facts of warming, the average temperature, and realizes the immediate impacts on its northern region. Does he believe that the Chinese are part of his conspiracy theory?

Mr. Lee Morrison: Mr. Speaker, I am afraid the hon. member lost me. I do not know what she was talking about with her conspiracy theory. If stating there are different schools of thought among scientists is a conspiracy theory, then I guess I believe in conspiracy theories.

As far as the warming of northern China, I imagine it would welcome that rather heartily at this point, but that is not the subject for discussion tonight.

The northern parts of China may be warming. The world is warming. We have already said that most people will agree on that. What we do not agree on is that this is man induced. This is something that I will not accept until somebody shows me some real empirical data, which to this point do not exist.

Mr. Joe Jordan (Leeds—Grenville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is so much here I am going to have to try to take a nanosecond and sort through it.

The member I guess is suggesting there is absolutely no damage that the human race can do on the earth that is not irreversible or will not have any sort of significant effect.

I really take exception to that. I suggest that as technology advances, our capacity to degrade the environment in significant and irreversible ways is increasing.

Having said that, back to the issue of global warming and specifically the globe, the member took us down memory lane here. I am just wondering, in the historical context is the member prepared to admit that the earth is round or does he still think it is flat?

• (2450)

Mr. Lee Morrison: Mr. Speaker, that is typical of the level of debate which we have heard from members opposite tonight. We try to discuss something rationally on a scientific basis and we get smart mouthed. That is all we get.

If they want to debate something, debate it, do not enter into this silly ad hominem stuff. We are adults here, at least some of us.

Mr. David Pratt (Nepean—Carleton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question will be short.

Obviously there are many countries around the globe that are going to be at Kyoto and signing on to some sort of climate change package and commitment. I would ask the hon. member if the

scientific evidence on which they have based their decisions to participate at Kyoto is all false. Are all world governments operating with incorrect or faulty scientific information. Is it only the Reform Party that has the straight facts on this one?

Mr. Lee Morrison: Mr. Speaker, science is not determined by a show of hands. I would answer the hon. member's question with an analogy. If he can recall Copernicus and Galileo, they were thought to be out of their minds. The whole scientific community, the whole bureaucratic community, the whole ecclesiastic community, said these people were mad because they believed that the earth was not the centre of the universe, that in fact the earth and the planets rotated around the sun. They received much the same treatment that some of your eminent climatologists today are receiving from the herd when they speak out against a theory which they say, in their opinion, is not proven.

I am not a scientific scholar but I did work in a scientific discipline for 30 years and I am capable of reading and understanding a scientific paper. Unfortunately the majority of the people who have entered into this debate are not and cannot. I hope that does not sound to egotistical. Maybe it does but it is an unfortunate truth. Unless one studies and learns how can one stand up and say "my god, I am an expert, I know it all"?

[Translation]

Mr. Yvon Godin: Mr. Speaker, in all honesty, I think the Bloc Quebecois should be first.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, but the Bloc Quebecois member was not present. Consequently, the hon. member for Lotbinière has the floor.

Mr. Odina Desrochers (Lotbinière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, first I want to thank the hon. member for Acadie—Bathurst for his kindness.

My speech will deal with two important issues. I will talk about the St. Lawrence River and then I will tell you about how little the Liberals and Reformers care about the environment.

You know how important the St. Lawrence River is to my riding of Lotbinière. My riding is bordered by the St. Lawrence on one side and includes the following municipalities: Saint-Pierre les Becquets, Deschailons, Leclercville, Lotbinière, Sainte-Croix et Saint-Antoine de Tilly. These villages located on the shores of the magnificent St. Lawrence River are tourist attractions along highway 132. They are part of Quebec's history and of Lotbinière's heritage.

• (2455)

Several mayors and representatives of these municipalities have contacted my office to express their fears about the alarming information that appears in the national media about the future of the St. Lawrence River. They wanted the Bloc Quebecois and its

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environment critic, the member for Rosemont, to continue their attacks on the Liberal government, which does not seem to be concerned about the future of the St. Lawrence, preferring to give in to the western oil lobby supported by the Reform Party.

I would ask the Prime Minister who is responsible for environmental issues in his government. The Minister of the Environment or the Reform Party?

On the subject of the St. Lawrence, scientists agree that the greenhouse effect will seriously affect it. According to a study issued last month by Environment Canada, the St. Lawrence will suffer the brunt of the negative effects of any warming trend; its flow would be substantially reduced. This negative impact would mean the disappearance of the aquatic grass bed, a key element in the reproduction of some 100 living species. This study indicated as well that the average temperature would rise by 4 degrees Celsius.

Once again we can see how the government treats Quebec when it has to make a decision on a subject as important as the environment.

I had hoped that the future of the St. Lawrence, the river that led our country's pioneers to discover Quebec and Ontario, would wake up the Liberals. But, no. They were put to sleep by Reform gases from western Canada.

The Minister of Finance claims to be concerned by the greenhouse effect. He said that the question should be managed by several departments. He even had the gall to say that the issue is often talked about during cabinet meetings. That is the way the Minister of Finance usually speaks, although he sometimes forgets things in his fiscal analyses. For example, he said that his government must invest to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, but he did not mention any specific amount.

The Minister of Finance tried to tell us that he would propose concrete solutions, when, at the same time, he continues to subsidize to the tune of hundreds of millions of dollars the development of oil and gas resources. For example, he gave almost half a billion for the tar sands project. Here again we can see where the Liberal government stands.

The commitments of the Liberal government with respect to the environment are clearly inadequate. If the Minister of the Environment wants to be taken seriously at the Kyoto summit, she should go back to the drawing board.

Recently, John Fraser, the Canadian environment ambassador, sent a pressing message to the Liberal government, asking it to review the position adopted in Regina in mid-November. He said that regardless of what we have done in terms of reduction, we have not done enough. And he went on to say that we all know that we can do more.

These words came from one of the many and invaluable collaborators appointed in 1994 by the current Prime Minister, but the Liberals are ignoring one of their own. Canada should follow the example of Quebec, which is the only province, with British Columbia, to have ratified the United Nations Convention on Climate Changes signed in Rio in 1992.

The Bloc Quebecois is proud of what Quebec has done in recent years in this area and intends to continue to pressure the federal government so that it understands once and for all the high stakes involved, the quality of life of the people of Quebec and of Canada.

[English]

Mr. Peter Adams (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to join this debate on global climate change. Like other members, I regret the 10 minute time limit. I would be glad to speak at great length on this topic and I am sure members would be glad to listen to me if the rules allowed.

As we have heard this evening from the Reform Party, there are still those who believe that climate change is not occurring. They think we have nothing to worry about and we can go on living and consuming as we have done for decades.

It is true there is a debate about the nature of climate change but no informed person could possibly believe that human induced changes are not occurring at an ever increasing rate.

• (2500)

The great forests of the earth are disappearing rapidly. Perhaps I should say that the great forest of the earth is disappearing rapidly. Huge areas that were previously covered with vegetation are now regularly laid bare for agriculture. Some of them have become deserts. Automobiles and factories with their emissions are still multiplying and so on.

All of these things, including the very existence of our cities, have already affected climate. Some of the direct effects on the atmosphere of such changes are already well established. It is not a matter of conjecture.

Carbon dioxide, CO₂, has been increasing in the atmosphere for generations. This is one of the greenhouse gases which traps heat in the atmosphere.

Increases in other greenhouse gases have become measurable in more recent times. These include methane, nitrous oxide, carbon monoxide and tropospheric, that is to say near the ground, ozone. Increases in these and other greenhouse gases should cause global warming.

Despite the selective science we have heard from the Reform Party, there is no scientific debate about the increases which I have mentioned. The debate arises as to the long term nature, magnitude and rate of change. The global system is so huge and complex that it is not easy to predict how the system will ultimately react to such

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changes and what its feedbacks will be, but the great weight of informed scientific opinion around the world is on the side of global warming.

The fact is that we insignificant human beings have got to the point where we can measurably interfere with this huge global system of which we are a part. I do not know which is more scary, the fact that we can significantly alter this global system in a situation where we can predict the effects or the fact that we can significantly alter this global system when we cannot predict the effects.

I happen to believe that one of the results of the changes, like those I have mentioned, is global warming. I believe that the warming, with its various and enormous side effects, has already begun.

I say this despite the fact that, with colleagues, I am in the process of publishing three papers on glaciers and a lake which, for particular reasons, failed to demonstrate measurable global warming. I thank God that the changes we are looking at are not yet so large that they can be detected with the data and time periods that we happen to have available.

From the point of view of this debate, from the point of view of us as members of Parliament, does it matter whether we are sure about global warming? If there is a chance of it, surely we should take reasonable steps to prevent it on simple precautionary grounds.

The changes which we have measured are bad enough in themselves. Who wants to live in an atmosphere of increasing ground-level ozone or nitrous acid, even if the climate is not warming? Ground-level ozone affects our lungs. It makes breathing difficult for those with lung problems. It decreases athletic performance. It also has a significant impact on agricultural production. Studies show that it already costs tens of millions of dollars a year in Ontario alone.

The fact is that a polluted atmosphere is an effective greenhouse atmosphere. Who wants to live in a poisonous greenhouse, whether it be warm or cold?

Greenhouse gases, including ground-level ozone and acid gases, can be reduced and air quality can be improved by tough emission standards for vehicles, factories and homes. We can use gasolines with lower amounts of volatile organic compounds. We can also reduce those gases by saving energy through recycling and other sensible measures mentioned by the Minister of the Environment.

We should never consume energy unnecessarily. It is inefficient, uneconomical and unhealthy to do so.

Greenhouse gases and atmospheric pollution can also be decreased by reforestation and proper forest management, and by low till and other appropriate agricultural practices.

• (2505)

As has been mentioned today, there is another well-known example of human interference with the only atmosphere that we have, and that is depletion of ozone in the stratosphere. I have to say that we are in a very difficult position because of these human actions of trying to increase ozone in the stratosphere and decrease ozone near the earth's surface as a result of the complications we have produced.

The ozone in the stratosphere shields us from ultraviolet radiation which causes skin cancer and other horrors. The action in slowing and one day stopping the depletion of ozone, in which Canada played a key part, is often touted as an example of what nations can do to prevent the deterioration of our globe.

Members should remember that despite the unprecedented international action on ozone depletion, the ozone layer will not be restored for 50 years. Until then, skin cancer rates and other effects will still be high.

As I have said, we are dealing with a huge system: our atmosphere. By the time we can detect effects, it is often too late. It is a bit like trying to turn a supertanker around, only more so. I believe that the people of Canada want their government, their businesses, their unions, all their leaders to set an example in combating global change. They know that in the long run the only development that is possible is sustainable development.

Let's take the lead in this matter in Kyoto and beyond.

Mrs. Karen Kraft Sloan (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the member on his speech.

It is my understanding that the hon. member used to teach at a university. Having had this experience, I am sure he is familiar with the peer review process. It has come to my attention numerous times in this House and in other arenas within the parliamentary sphere that the so-called scientific experts that the Reform Party is continually using to quote to debunk climate change science are individuals who are often citing opinion as opposed to scientific fact and they are certainly going without peer review.

I wonder if my hon. colleague could comment on the peer review process and why it is so significant for scientific research.

Mr. Peter Adams: Mr. Speaker, I thank the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment for her comments and question.

It is true. I have listened carefully to the Reform Party. I am very wary of people who depend on authority, who depend on the name of a scientist. In general, we have to look at the literature, as the parliamentary secretary has said, weigh it up for what it is worth, where it came from, whether it was peer reviewed.

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The peer review process is quite simple. It is when a scientist submits an article to a journal. That article is sent to a range of experts, not just experts who have one opinion, but to a range of experts, and then the paper is returned with comments and is either published or not.

I mentioned three papers of my own. Two of those are refereed and will appear in international journals. The other is not refereed. I think it is important to distinguish between those two.

With regard to my own work, I have worked now for 30 years. I have mainly worked on glaciers and on lake ice. If I can give the example of one of the papers because I deliberately mentioned the fact that these recent papers of ours do not demonstrate global warming. No doubt that in some other house people like the Reform members opposite will use those as examples of the fact that global warming is not occurring, but in the case we looked at, if I can give one example, we studied two glaciers for 30 years. At the end of that time, the glaciers were smaller, but in all honesty, with the methods that we were using and over the time period that we had, we could not demonstrate a trend. It is in fact a trend that we are talking about.

• (2510)

The member opposite was talking about the fluctuations of climate. The climate of the globe continually fluctuates. The discussion today is about whether since the industrial revolution human changes, and I mentioned the very well established increase in carbon dioxide which has now been measured since the middle of the last century, are systematically moving the climate in a particular direction.

If greenhouse warming is true, the climate is going to continue to get warmer and get colder in a natural way, but when it is getting warmer the warming will be reinforced by the artificial changes which are occurring, the greenhouse effect, and when it is getting cooler the cooling will be reduced by the artificial warming which is occurring.

We are not debating whether the climate was going up and down a thousand years ago. We are debating whether since the industrial revolution there have been changes which have significantly affected the way climate varies.

We would not expect climate with the greenhouse effect to simply keep warming and warming and warming. It is going up and down and the greenhouse effect would gradually steer it toward higher temperatures.

I would say one more thing if I might because the member opposite spent some time on this matter. It is not just a matter of statistics and gathering figures and putting trend lines to them. There is also the matter of physics. I have mentioned the changes

which have been measured, CO₂, nitrous oxides, methane and so on. It is true those gases have increased in the atmosphere.

The physics of that is that interacting with radiation they will warm up the atmosphere. We do not just have to depend on figures and trends. We have to use the science which is available to us in this century to support our opinions. That is in fact what the scientific community is doing at the present time.

[Translation]

Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight to stress the importance of acting immediately on the issue of climate change.

On the eve of the Kyoto conference, we have a responsibility toward our children and future generations to put forward a responsible strategy that will protect our environment while ensuring a viable economy for years to come.

The protection of our environment is logical for several reasons. The most obvious one is, of course, maintaining a sound environment for the future generation.

My honourable colleagues from other parties have pointed out the cost associated with the use of energy in a responsible way, but they never talked about the consequences of not developing an environmental strategy.

I will give you an example. Not long ago, I was sitting on the Standing Committee on Natural Resources when our colleagues from the Reform Party asked: "Why should we in Canada undertake environmental prevention procedures if the other countries do not to so?" To that I responded that I was proud to be a Canadian. Canada has often shown the way to other countries, which then followed suit. It is because of attitudes like the one displayed by the member of the Reform Party that we sometimes have problems.

I am surprised to hear tonight the speeches of Reform Party members on the environment and on respect for our planet. They show a total lack of respect for our planet. These speeches should not even be tolerated. It is all fine and well to talk about scientists and experts. It reminds me of when I was working in a mine where there were 250 Diesel engines about which the experts said that they did not affect the miners' health. Why? Because the company was profitable. Without saying that they were bought, it is still because of experts such as these that I have a damned problem. Please excuse my language, Mr. Speaker.

Do these members want to tell us that our children's illnesses do not involve any cost, that entire communities are not penalized when fish no longer have an habitat and fish stocks disappear?

• (2515)

We have a responsibility toward Canadians, namely to create a context that will ensure a prosperous economy, while protecting our environment.

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The approach put forward by this government obviously does not work. Following the Rio summit, the government set up a strategy which called for voluntary participation in the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. What happened? Greenhouse gas emissions did not diminish. They did not even remain at the same level. In fact, they have increased over the last five years.

At one point, the government wanted to put a stop to pollution along the highways, right across the country. Now, when someone throws something out of his car window, it costs him \$1,000. I can guarantee that the roadside is much cleaner than before. It is so because the government took concrete steps that led to this improvement. I can guarantee that people would not have acted voluntarily, if it had not stepped in.

Today, if the government told people it is giving them an opportunity to have a clean environment along the roads, coffee drinkers would not throw their cups out of the window. With a fine of \$100, or even \$1,000 in certain provinces, people keep their cups in the car and wait to throw it in a garbage can. I just do not believe in voluntary participation.

There are colleagues in this House who do not think that it is very serious that Canada has been acting irresponsible for the last five years. They talk of the costs involved if we adopt a responsible position. But we are already paying the price for failing to act.

In fact, the government has conducted a study on the impact of climate change. According to that study, in my region of the Atlantic, we will be especially vulnerable to a rise in the level of the sea. That will mean more floods, the loss of habitats for certain species of fish, changes in the landmass and a drop in the reproductive success rate of marine birds.

The costs are very high when there are floods. When fish stocks disappear, communities suffer. When will the government stop playing the ostrich and take its head out of the sand? The time to act is now and not 15 years down the road, when we will no longer be able to save our environment. We must act and act now.

Acting now does not mean that our economy will be the worse off. There are alternatives that can create jobs while protecting our environment. Through simple measures such as ensuring proper maintenance for their vehicles, Canadians can reduce carbon dioxide emissions by three tonnes per year.

Instead of using 250 trucks that pollute the environment, we could use three locomotives that could do the same work but create much less pollution.

I was speaking with CN officials this week. I asked them how many trucks on the road three locomotives would replace. They told me they would replace 250 tractor trailers. In addition to these 250 exhaust stacks, there are also 4,500 tires. What will happen to these tires later on? Most likely they will be another source of pollution. Now, six locomotives would do the same job as 500

trucks on the road. So, we can take our 4,500 tires and call it 9,000. Picture this, I drove my car from Moncton, New Brunswick, to Sussex and that took me 50 minutes. During this trip, I met no less than 120 trucks coming the other way, and that is not counting those that were going in the same direction as I was.

Strategies could be developed to make the burning of coal less polluting. I have information here about new technology that uses coal to dispose of hospital waste in the United States. This technology is not only good for the environment, it is less expensive. Using this technology could mean savings of up to \$400,000 a year for a hospital.

Environmental protection can be good for everyone. Other strategies could create more well-paid jobs over time.

• (2520)

Through research and development, we could develop skilled labour that acquired its expertise here and that could then go and work outside the country. Denmark is a good example of a country that decided to invest in energy produced by windmills and that now exports its expertise throughout the world. We are already behind Europe on these issues. We must act now to remain competitive in the energy sector.

Canada is recognized worldwide as one of the best countries to live in. We have this reputation, because we are the leaders in a number of areas. We show the world that assuming our responsibilities means creating a better world.

In a week's time, leaders from all over will be gathering here in Ottawa for the signing of a treaty prohibiting anti-personnel mines. Without the courage of the Canadians, this historic event could not occur.

Canadians are courageous. They want their government to act responsibly and fairly. They want us to be brave now. This means setting specific objectives that will guarantee slower climate change. This means we must all do our part and use less polluting forms of energy. This common effort must focus on strategies that are based on new technologies and that create jobs.

For the most vulnerable industries, we must look towards diversification of local economies. In the Atlantic region, we have seen what happened when the disappearance of an industry was not anticipated. Now we no longer have any fish and entire communities are suffering.

In order to avoid such a situation, the government must develop long term strategies to prevent the disappearance of certain industries. We must not just do the responsible thing, we must do the humane thing.

Canada has never benefited when its government has refused to be courageous and do the right thing. Protecting our environment

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is not only the right thing to do, but it is also the strategy that will ensure that Canada will still be the best country in which to live in the next century.

[English]

Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay—Columbia, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I make mention of the fact that the hour right now is 22 minutes after 1 o'clock in the morning. I mention that only to illustrate the fact that the government is squeezing this very vital debate into a time slot that makes it almost impossible for members to be able to take part. This is a shame. When the debate started yesterday, we ended up with 10 days to Kyoto. We are now down to nine days to Kyoto and we still do not know what the government position is.

Let me explain what the Reform position is. As far as environmental protection is concerned, Reform along with governments, industry and Canadians all recognize that action needs to be taken to protect our environment where there is a demonstrable need.

The Reform Party supports environmental policies on greenhouse gas emissions based on concrete scientific evidence. The federal government has failed to provide documents that have formed the basis of the government's position on global warming. We wonder where the leadership of the government is coming from and obviously the Prime Minister is the leader of this government.

I draw attention to *Hansard* of November 5 and a question from my colleague, the member for Edmonton North concerning Candu reactors being sold without any environmental review by the government to Turkey and China. In part the Prime Minister answered: "We believe that exporting Candu reactors is very important for the Canadian economy. It is extremely important for countries which will use the electricity generated by nuclear power to replace coal, which is causing a lot of climate problems".

I would like to know from the Prime Minister and the Liberal government why he would make this quantum leap, this connection, when he should have been answering a question about why the government is not doing any environmental review on the Candu reactor sales to Turkey and China, he turned it into a global warming issue.

• (2525)

I submit, as have all other Reform speakers, that this entire process we are involved in is one of watching lemmings run. It is one of very questionable science. I quote the consensus of 2,500 scientists that these members have been referring to. It is pointed out that 11 chapters of this supposed 2,500 scientist document were written by only about 80 authors. Most of the hundreds of contributors listed were simply experts who allowed their studies

to be quoted without necessarily supporting the report's conclusions.

Further, they state that the earth's average temperatures have risen by a modest 0.3° to 0.6° in the 140 years since records began. They point out that most of this warming occurred before 1940 and was followed by decades of climate cooling from about 1940 through to the 1960s at a time when greenhouse gas emissions actually increased. Many climatologists feared the world was headed for a mini ice age. This was referred to by my Reform colleague earlier. Even the UN panel's chairman, Bert Bolin, admits that the pre-1940 warming is probably a natural recovery from an earlier natural cooling. Instead, of the 96 years of this century so far, 32 show a warming trend and 64 show a cooling trend.

One of the items I have yet to hear in this debate tonight is mention of other natural phenomena like El Nino. We can expect in my constituency where we had record levels of snow, cold and freezing weather last year that this year the temperatures are going to be moderated and we will be receiving less snow. Why? Greenhouse gases, global warming? No. El Nino. There are all sorts of impacts on our climate that are natural impacts. There are impacts that we as human beings can and do create but we do not understand the relationship between them.

Let us take a look at Kyoto. The countries that are going to Kyoto are countries like Canada. Notwithstanding all of the claims that we have the second highest per capita CO₂ emissions, the fact is that Canada puts out 2% while the U.S. puts out 23%. China, Russia, India and Ukraine combined put out 27% and guess what? They are not going to Kyoto.

As my leader demonstrated earlier, there is a very real possibility that we will create serious problems for our economy in trying to achieve these objectives and we will destroy parts of this economy. If we are going to destroy our economy why are we doing it without a knowledge and understanding of the background of where we are coming from?

Where is Canada? Canada has already achieved 80% of its goals in reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Most of the growth in greenhouse gas emissions is expected to come from developing countries. Countries such as China and India will be the world's largest emitters of greenhouse gases by the next century, yet developing countries do not have to participate in the reductions.

The possibility of climate change is a global issue and must be addressed collectively. Developing countries are responsible for 40% of the world emissions. I repeat that this is a global problem and developing countries are responsible for 40% of the emissions, so why will they not be there? What are we trying to do in terms of paring down our economy for what goal or what objectives?

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We must ensure in Kyoto that any commitments made are in Canada's interest and recognize Canada's unique circumstances. Any greenhouse gas emission targets must be realistic, achievable and based on sound scientific evidence. Therein lies the problem with the agreement from Brazil.

• (2530)

The problem there was that the goals were not realistic. They were not achievable. As we have clearly demonstrated they were not based on sound scientific evidence. A national consensus should be gained before international commitments are made.

It is very scary that the government has made the commitment to go to Kyoto to sign an agreement without even telling us its position. Who are the negotiators and what is the position the negotiators will take? We have no idea. Who is going to be giving them direction?

What is at stake for people in my constituency of Kootenay—Columbia? Elkford, Sparwood and Fernie are all communities that are completely based on the coal industry. The south country, Cranbrook and as far away as Creston, are the bedrooms for many thousands of workers from the Elk Valley. In Golden and Revelstoke, CP Rail workers will be affected because of the amount of coal that is shipped through there.

What does that mean? If these people do not have work they will be moving out, which means the regional districts will no longer be able to collect their revenues. What will happen to municipal budgets? What will happen to libraries, garbage collection, water and sewer, and for what?

This reminds me so much of lemmings. Mr. Speaker, you may be old enough—I know I am—to recall a movie put out by Walt Disney. It showed lemmings, which is what speakers from the other parties reminded me of, all headed in one direction. They all jumped off the cliff. That was not true either; that was a fabrication of the moviemaker.

In conclusion, a UN panel report stated:

A prudent way to deal with climate change is through a portfolio of actions aimed at mitigation, adaptation and improvement of knowledge. The appropriate portfolio will differ for each country. The challenge is not to find the best policy today for the next 100 years, but to select a prudent strategy and to adjust it over time in light of new information.

I beg the government not to let the word Kyoto become a word for needless economic suicide.

Mrs. Karen Kraft Sloan (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a rather frightening array of opportunities that I have to address as a result of what the member opposite just said. Once again he evokes the pseudo-science that the Reform seems to have such great comfort in. He talks about El Nino which has to do with southern oscillation.

El Nino right now is the most intense and longest El Nino we have seen in almost 2000 years. Many climate scientists are talking about the connection of El Nino and global warming. There are connections the member seems to ignore.

He spoke about a cooling period, but he neglected to tell Canadians that this was a period where ozone depletion substances were gathering and acting as a cooling. This is a very clear piece of information.

He went on about developing countries not participating in Kyoto in the reduction of greenhouse gases. Again he is misleading Canadians because developing countries have ratified the framework convention on climate change. They are taking significant steps to reduce growth in greenhouse gas emissions. Brazil, India and Mexico, for example, have dramatically increased energy prices and have launched specific programs to improve energy efficiency.

The member opposite does not seem to believe in any of this. I would like him to speak on behalf of his constituents and tell something to the people of the south island state. I had the opportunity of meeting the president of Micronesia who implored me to make sure that Canada did something significant on the issue of climate change. His country of Micronesia was shipping rice to nearby island states because its taro fields were being flooded.

• (2535)

Will the member's constituents welcome these people into their homes when they find out that rising sea levels have completely drowned out south island?

Mr. Jim Abbott: Mr. Speaker, where the member and I have a difference of opinion is that I do not profess to have any idea of the source of El Nino. I am rather surprised she has taken a quantum leap on—I have no idea—its actual source. There may be a relationship but we simply do not know. Until we know, to trash our economy and trash the communities I represent are not acceptable alternatives.

In terms of the developing countries taking significant steps, I ask where Canada started. Canada is in a position of having done a tremendous amount of reduction of CO₂ emissions from 1990 to 1995.

I do not really understand if we are at a level of only contributing 2% of CO₂ emissions. We are not just talking about CO₂ emissions. We are talking about greenhouse gas emissions that are broader than CO₂ emissions. We are at a point of having things in a position where we can continue to improve but are only contributing 2%. She says we must do something significant on climate change. Let us assume, just for the sake of argument, that Canada is in a cost effective position to reduce its CO₂ emissions and greenhouse gas emissions by 10%. This would be a quantum leap. In the case of CO₂ it would reduce worldwide CO₂ emissions by .2%.

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When we do not have the developing nations, Russia, China, Ukraine and India at Kyoto, nations which combined contribute 27% of the CO₂ emissions, where are we going with this? Once again the position of the Liberals is one of do good, feel good.

Mr. Jim Pankiw (Saskatoon—Humboldt, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to contribute something to the debate that at this point I have not heard mentioned. I am referring to the scientific method.

Repeatedly in the debate I have heard members of the Liberal Party refer to the science of global warming. However, before we can even attempt to purport to have a scientific basis for a theory, the theory should have passed the scientific method which is a randomized, double blinded clinical trial.

In other words, in the case of global warming we would need two solar systems. We would have to give the power to someone to increase carbon dioxide levels on the earth in one of the solar systems. The person would be blinded to knowing in which solar system he or she would be increasing carbon dioxide emissions.

Then we would measure the temperature of the earth in the solar systems, determine if there was any change and report the findings. The findings would show that nobody knew, neither the earth nor the contributor of the carbon dioxide, which one was being contributed or which one had or did not have an increase in temperature. These would be the results. We would see that either increased carbon dioxide caused the increase in temperature or did not, and to what degree. I am not saying that carbon dioxide emissions do not increase temperatures of global climates.

● (2540)

We cannot lay our economic policies on the back of so-called science when in fact there is no science. There is hypothesis, there are suggestions to some observations and what effects may or may not be happening, but there really is no science.

The carbon dioxide emissions of our country apparently contribute to approximately 2 per cent of global carbon dioxide emissions. Many of the major nations with industries which emit carbon dioxide will not be at the table in Kyoto. What is the point of such a small player in the world, a minor contributor to global carbon dioxide emissions, taking a world leading stance in what should be done when we do not have any real science on which to base our position?

The real disturbing thing is what the Liberals are proposing. The hon. member from the Liberal Party who spoke prior to me made reference to a dramatic increase in energy prices in some other countries in an attempt to curb their carbon dioxide emissions. This concerns me deeply.

Why would we curb the economic growth of Canada? Why would we suppress our economic activity? Why would we increase the price of energy, the cost of heating our homes and putting gasoline in the vehicles of ordinary Canadians? I would add that it could be a very substantial increase depending on what position the Liberals take in Kyoto which to this point they have been either unable or unwilling to reveal.

What would be the point in harming families, increasing the costs of heating their homes and fueling their cars when it would have no demonstrable or significant impact on the amount of carbon dioxide emissions in the world?

To conclude, I would again refer to what the hon. member from the Liberal Party stated when she referred to the fact that Reform members of Parliament are raising concern with this issue. She referred to our position as pseudo science. My point is it is all pseudo science to suggest that the world is heating or the world is cooling.

Last winter in my constituency of Saskatoon—Humboldt we had record cold temperatures. For as long as they have kept records, it was never colder. That in itself is no evidence that the world temperature is not increasing but on the other hand it would tend to suggest that maybe it is not.

I have a real problem. Despite the fact that the impact our carbon dioxide emissions will have is insignificant we may try to be a world leader. Despite the fact that this may not have a basis in science, that it may not be true, and despite the fact that our measures are really not going to have significant impact on the carbon dioxide emissions of the world, we are going to implement serious tax increases for Canadian families on their fuel consumption for heating their homes and fuel their automobiles. This will hurt ordinary average Canadians.

In view of the tax increases which ordinary average Canadians have been exposed to by this Liberal government, the previous Conservative government and the Liberal government before that, I implore the Liberals to use and exercise common sense when they go to Kyoto and not subject Canadian families to yet another tax increase with no basis.

● (2545)

Mr. Rick Laliberte (Churchill River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to raise an issue with the hon. member. He was discussing taxes in his speech. Does the member realize that \$600 million has been given to the oil sands industry? If we took that money out and the industry decided to raise taxes, it would be a carbon tax.

There is a huge industry out there making profits and it will raise the pump prices during mid-winter when we need fuel in our backyards to keep our homes warm. All of a sudden the petroleum industry raises prices without warning. Nobody talks about that,

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but for the last two months all we have heard is this carbon tax issue.

They finally recognize that there is an environmental problem. Maybe some common sense person deep down in their ranks had written that there is environmental consciousness in the Reform ranks.

They have been snagging their scientific facts from a satellite scientist way out in outer space. That is where their policy seems to be. Satellites have been measuring temperature in the atmosphere, but if you measure temperature on the outskirts of greenhouse gas levels of course it will be colder. Those gases are trapped inside the atmosphere.

When I was young I thought the sky was immense and there was no end to it. However, when we grow up and look at the facts, we know that we live within the realm of our globe, our planet and our atmosphere. We live and breathe as a species, collectively. We are interconnected. That is what we have to realize.

What does the hon. member tell his children and grandchildren about his beliefs? His children and grandchildren will be the voters of the future. They will be the ones to decide who will lead.

Mr. Jim Pankiw: Mr. Speaker, I do not really know how to respond to that somewhat disjointed and incoherent speech by the hon. member, except to say that when I go home to my constituency what I will tell the people I represent is that I am opposed to

increased taxes on fuel, increased taxes not only on fuel for their automobiles but on fuel for heating their homes. I am also opposed to a carbon tax which would cripple the petroleum industry and kill employment in the region of the country which I represent. I would like to see taxes scaled back.

The last thing I want to see this country do is impose a 30 cent or 40 cent tax on gasoline. That would kill even more jobs in this country.

We are already facing increases in Canada pension plan premiums which will take effect if the government manages to ram through its legislation. Payroll taxes will increase. The cost to employers will increase. It will affect jobs. It will affect wages.

I am here listening to a member of the New Democratic Party who is proposing more taxes for ordinary Canadians.

• (2550)

We are crippled by taxes. I cannot even comment on what the man said. It made no sense. All I can say is I am for lower taxes.

The Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to order made Tuesday, November 25, the motion is deemed adopted.

Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 1.50 a.m.)

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