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(HANSARD)

Tuesday, April 24, 2007

—
Speaker: The Honourable Peter Milliken

CONTENTS

(Table of Contents appears at back of this issue.)

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, April 24, 2007

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

● (1005)
[English]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8) I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's responses to 13 petitions.

* * *

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Mr. Norman Doyle (St. John's East, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 13th report of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration, reporting Bill C-280, An Act to Amend the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (coming into force of sections 110, 111 and 171), without amendment.

STATUS OF WOMEN

Ms. Yasmin Ratansi (Don Valley East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 17th report of the Standing Committee on Status of Women entitled "Spending Orientations for Status of Women Canada and other agencies".

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PETITIONS

AGE OF CONSENT

Mr. Leon Benoit (Vegreville—Wainwright, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition on behalf of constituents on protecting our children from sexual predators.

The petitioners have noted that organizations such as the Canadian Police Association, a number of provincial governments and a parliamentary committee have all called for raising the age of consent. They have also noted that studies show that 14 and 15 year olds are most vulnerable when it comes to sexual exploitation. They

are calling on Parliament to raise the age of protection on sexual consent to 16 years from the current 14 years.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

POINTS OF ORDER

COMMENTS BY MEMBER FOR EDMONTON—MILL WOODS—BEAUMONT—
SPEAKER'S RULING

The Speaker: I am now prepared to rule on the point of order raised on April 16, 2007, by the hon. member for Beaches—East York concerning remarks made by the hon. member for Edmonton—Mill Woods—Beaumont.

[Translation]

I would like to thank the hon. member for Beaches—East York for bringing this matter to the attention of the House. I also wish to thank the hon. member for Edmonton—Mill Woods—Beaumont for his response.

[English]

In raising this matter, the hon. member for Beaches—East York stated that during statements by members on March 28, 2007 the hon. member for Edmonton—Mill Woods—Beaumont subjected the executive director of the Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada to a personal attack. The remarks in question made particular reference to evidence given before the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities.

I cannot, of course, deal with allegations arising from proceedings in committee. It is at the committee itself that the hon. member for Beaches—East York must raise any concerns regarding the questioning of a particular witness.

Business of Supply

I have, however, reviewed with considerable care the statement in the House which gave rise to this point of order. In it the hon. member for Edmonton—Mill Woods—Beaumont commented on evidence given at a public meeting of a standing committee and therefore a matter of public record. He went on to express certain opinions about that evidence.

In the view of the Chair, his statement concerned issues of public policy rather than persons, notwithstanding the fact that a particular witness was mentioned by name. While some hon. members might dispute the opinions expressed by the hon. member for Edmonton—Mill Woods—Beaumont or quarrel with his interpretation, his remarks fall clearly within the broad parameters of the freedom of speech enjoyed by all members of the House.

Having said this, I would encourage hon. members to exercise great caution before referring to members of the public by name. I quote from page 524 of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*:

Members are discouraged from referring by name to persons who are not Members of Parliament and who do not enjoy parliamentary immunity, except in extraordinary circumstances when the national interest calls for the naming of an individual.

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker Fraser elaborated this principle in a ruling delivered on May 26, 1987, in which he said:

I am sure that all hon. Members would agree that we have a responsibility to protect the innocent, not only from outright slander, but from any slur directly or indirectly implied.

[English]

It is incumbent upon all members to exercise fairness with respect to those who are not in a position to defend themselves. That being said, the Chair finds no grounds for further action in the present case.

I thank the hon. member for Beaches—East York again for having brought this matter to the attention of the Chair.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[Translation]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

OPPOSITION MOTION—GREENHOUSE GAS REDUCTION TARGET

Mr. Bernard Bigras (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, BQ) moved:

That the House call on the government to set fixed greenhouse gas reduction targets as soon as possible so as to meet the objectives of the Kyoto Protocol, a prerequisite for the establishment, as expeditiously as possible, of a carbon exchange in Montréal.

Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise today on this Bloc Québécois opposition day to discuss the Kyoto protocol and the importance of setting fixed greenhouse gas reduction targets for ourselves in Canada. Hopefully, this motion will also inspire the government to establish a Canadian climate exchange, which we feel should be located in Montreal.

The motion of the Bloc Québécois reads as follows:

That the House call on the government to set fixed greenhouse gas reduction targets as soon as possible so as to meet the objectives of the Kyoto Protocol, a

prerequisite for the establishment, as expeditiously as possible, of a carbon exchange in Montréal.

The Bloc Québécois' motion is another of many that have been developed and introduced by the Bloc Québécois in the last 10 years. We have to remember that this protocol, which was signed and agreed to by the international community in 1997, was the first step in an international effort to ensure that the countries in the industrialized world, working in common but each in its own way, would impose a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions within their own borders.

The Bloc Québécois was in Kyoto in 1997. The Bloc Québécois got an accurate picture of the state of the environment on this planet. And then we came back here, to the House of Commons, and sounded the alarm, not only to Canadian parliamentarians, but to the entire population of Quebec and Canada, calling on the federal government to act expeditiously, in 1997, to reduce greenhouse gas emissions within Canada's borders. We did not leave it at that in 1997. In Quebec we initiated a broad coalition, initiated also by the young people of Quebec, calling on the federal government to ratify the Kyoto protocol as quickly as possible. It was as a result of that initiative in Quebec, which the Bloc Québécois supported, that several years later the Canadian government got on board with what the Bloc Québécois was calling for.

Between 1997 and 2000 we had a federal government whose only goal was to advance the interests of the west and of the economic base of Alberta, the oil industry, a heavy producer of greenhouse gas emissions. We are well aware that while the oil industry is the cornerstone of Alberta's energy policy, Quebec's manufacturing industry was in danger of being the first victim of the federal approach in the years that followed, the goal of which was quite simply to penalize Quebec in the overall effort to reduce greenhouse gases in Canada.

We must recall the facts. While Quebec, with Manitoba, was preparing and presenting one of the first plans to combat climate change in Canada, the federal government was sitting on its hands. Remember Quebec was one of the first provinces to take action in the fight against climate change. What we are essentially calling for today is more fairness in the approach that will be presented by the federal government in the days or weeks to come.

As a result of its actions, Quebec will be able to present to the international community, and to Canadians, some of the best greenhouse gas reduction figures in Canada, since we have succeeded in limiting the increase in our emissions to approximately 6% as compared to more than 26% or 27% for Canada.

● (1010)

It has been shown that when we act and decide to implement a policy, a plan and effective programs to fight climate change, we can achieve the greenhouse gas emission objectives.

Business of Supply

Today, the government is proposing that we set intensity targets. The reason we put forward an opposition day motion today is to send the government a clear message: we want absolute targets for greenhouse gas reduction, which result in real reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. We do not want to support this federal approach which would take into account the growth in oil production and in the oil sands sector when setting greenhouse gas reduction targets.

We believe that the only acceptable reference is the one in the Kyoto protocol. It requires an absolute reduction of 6% of greenhouse gas emissions in Canada. This is what we are asking for in this motion. Let us not forget that over the next few days, the federal government will try to persuade us, with its intensity targets, that it has rigorous and strict greenhouse gas reduction regulations for the major polluters and industrial emitters, which are primarily concentrated in western Canada.

It is important to understand the situation: a 15% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions based on an intensity approach represents a 179% increase in greenhouse gas emissions in the case of the oil sands sector alone.

This government has a legal and a moral obligation to respect the principles set out in the Kyoto protocol and not to let the public think that the targets in place will enable Canada to meet its international commitments. The reality is that these intensity-based reductions will have the effect of increasing greenhouse gas emissions in the oil and gas sector by approximately 46%. The public has not been taken in. This past Sunday in Montreal they sent a clear message: they want a real reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, a real reduction achieved through clearly established absolute greenhouse gas emission reduction targets. This is the only solid means of bringing us in line with Kyoto protocol requirements in order to preserve our environment and develop our economy.

Not only will these intensity-based targets not improve the state of our environment, but there is also a risk of their compromising one of the most powerful tools of the Kyoto protocol, namely the creation of a carbon exchange. The creation of an emission credit exchange system and a climate exchange is among the most powerful tools available to us. It will enable us to meet our international commitments, while providing worthwhile prospects to Quebec businesses, which will be able to sell and buy greenhouse gas emission credits on the Canadian, European and international markets. Quebec will be able to sell credits because many businesses have successfully reduced their greenhouse gas emissions. Those, in my opinion, are important tools for developing our economy.

Moreover, an analysis by Richard Kelertas, forestry product sector analyst for Dundee Securities, in the April 7 issue of *Journal Les Affaires* has indicated that the creation of a well organized carbon credit negotiation system—perhaps as early as 2008—might result in a marked rise in the worth of a number of Canadian forestry companies.

• (1015)

Contrary to what the government would have us believe, protecting the environment and establishing real greenhouse gas reduction targets will not hurt our economy. Rather, this will enable

many businesses and industrial sectors in Canada and Quebec to reposition themselves and create major economic opportunities.

That being said, we must read what Mr. Kelertas wrote. What is a well-organized system? It is one in which the targets we set and the system we create are compatible with existing foreign markets.

The European example is probably the best one available. Europe is working toward the Kyoto protocol targets and will probably achieve them. We believe that by complying with the targets, Europe will limit the protocol's economic impact to less than 1% of the gross domestic product. Reports of the European Commission have made this clear. That means it is possible, here in Canada, as in Europe, to both comply with the Kyoto protocol and limit its economic impact.

Clearly, this proves that this week's analysis by the Minister of the Environment does not hold water. This proves that the premises on which he based his economic analysis of the Kyoto protocol are biased. We must establish carbon credit trading mechanisms.

Where should the exchange be located? It should be located in Montreal. Why Montreal? Simply because this specialized area is already part of Montreal's derivatives sector. In 1999, in Canada, an agreement was signed with the Toronto Stock Exchange that left spot trading to Toronto and derivatives to the Montreal Exchange. Emission credits and environmental markets are derivatives.

Of course, in recent weeks, we have heard that the Toronto Stock Exchange would like to be the site of this derivatives market. Toronto would like to have the climate exchange. However, under this 1999 agreement, Montreal is entitled to the climate exchange because it specializes in derivatives. Montreal did not simply let itself be guided by an administrative agreement or courted by certain markets. It went further and, in December 2005, decided to sign an agreement with the Chicago Stock Exchange to form important north-south economic ties in connection with the climate exchange. I believe that the Montreal Exchange is better suited, simply because it has this expertise and experience, and could play an important role.

Luc Bertrand, president and CEO of the Montreal Exchange, has said that combining the Montreal Exchange's unique position in Canada's financial markets and CCX's global leadership in environmental markets will result in innovation for the benefit of all Canadians and the environment.

Business of Supply

● (1020)

There is definite interest in creating this emission credit trading system in Canada, because it will create numerous job opportunities. But the federal government's inaction in recent weeks is hurting Canadian companies like Biothermica, which does business abroad and is just waiting for absolute greenhouse gas reduction targets and a national registry that will enable this credit exchange system to be set up, in order to deal on the international market. But instead of announcing absolute targets, the minister came to Montreal yesterday to present catastrophic greenhouse gas reduction scenarios. He announced that hydro would cost 60% to 65% more in Quebec.

The federal government does not know much about the reality of energy in Quebec, where 95% of electricity is hydroelectricity. To extend its fear campaign into Quebec, on principles that are not prevalent in Quebec, is to mislead the public. This fearmongering is unacceptable. That is why we are presenting this motion today, because it is important. Before the government announces its reduction targets a few days from now, we are sending a clear message to the federal government: we are demanding that the Kyoto protocol be respected. We want absolute targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. We want an emissions trading system. We want to create opportunities for Quebec and for Canada and to protect our environment at the same time.

On this side of the House, we have made constructive, concrete proposals that can work well with the international proposals that have been made so far. The only thing the government has presented is a fear campaign.

By trying to kill the Kyoto protocol, by rejecting its greenhouse gas reduction targets, by telling us it has no intention of using the mechanisms in the protocol, the government is simply telling us that it does not want to protect the planet. We have to make that clear and we will continue to be vigilant. Furthermore, Canada may want to refuse to honour its international commitments, but I can assure the Canadian public that Quebec does not intend, as the federal government has done so far, to reject the Kyoto protocol.

We have implemented a plan that allows us to respect our greenhouse gas reduction targets. The minister said to me last week that Quebec received \$350 million and that we should be happy about that. Let us not forget that the federal government's approach in the coming weeks and days will not get Quebec \$350 million ahead because if we weaken the foundation of Quebec's economy and its manufacturing sector, Quebec will suffer even heavier losses.

Finally, with today's motion, we are simply asking that the polluter-pay principle apply instead of polluter-paid.

● (1025)

[English]

Mr. Alan Tonks (York South—Weston, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to address a question to my colleague who has just spoken. I sat with him on the environment committee and have a great deal of respect, as I am sure the House does, for his insights into matters related to Kyoto and in particular what he has spoken to, which is the matter of setting up an emissions credit trading system that would be effective in meeting the objectives of Kyoto.

I am drawn to the point he has made with respect to the location of an emissions credit system that would be administered through the Montreal Exchange as opposed to Toronto's. I do not want this debate to descend into one of city versus city. That is not the intent or the objective of my question. The objective of my question is to establish clearly what would be the best regime and where a commodities type of trading regime would be most effective.

When we were discussing the emissions credit system, there were concerns raised about investing in credits that would simply be buying hot air, in particular from former Soviet countries and Russia, which are much behind with respect to their industrial and technology applications to reduce carbon.

Given that our economy, as Europe is finding, is so integrated with that of the United States and given that we should be closely cooperating, not setting competitive mechanisms in place, does the member feel that the Montreal location would be better suited to working in the North American context as to setting a price for carbon and as to making it most effective as the administrative tool for meeting our Kyoto objectives?

Does he feel that Toronto's exchange or other exchanges across the country would have no role to play in that? We are talking about a matter of national policy, not establishing one mechanism in one particular geographic or regional part of the country. What would be the most effective approach to that?

● (1030)

[Translation]

Mr. Bernard Bigras: Mr. Speaker, I do not wish to provoke a quarrel between Montreal and Toronto any more than my hon. colleague. However, the reality is that there is only one stock exchange that would qualify in the context of a climate exchange, and this is based on an agreement signed amongst Canadian exchange partners in 1999.

Montreal is not in competition with Toronto. Montreal is simply the only exchange platform authorized to accommodate this new exchange. As long as this agreement exists, it is not a matter of competition. It is a fact. Montreal is the only exchange platform in Canada that can accommodate this exchange. Incidentally, this is a significant market. We estimate its value at \$70 billion.

I do appreciate my hon. colleague's question. In recent weeks, the Minister of the Environment tried to suggest that we were planning to ask the government to use taxpayers' money to purchase credits from other countries. That is not what we are asking. Nor are we asking the government to become involved in the exchange of what is known as hot air credits. In fact, we are simply suggesting that the government establish an emissions trading system within Canada, along with a well organized registry, as called for by the forestry industry, and an exchange platform in Montreal, because it is the only stock exchange that is qualified at this time to accommodate these exchanges. Thus, like Europe, we would be able to meet our Kyoto protocol commitments while minimizing the economic impact.

Business of Supply

Personally, I feel this exchange model should please the Conservatives. The free market approach cannot be applied only when the Conservatives decide it is suitable; it could very easily apply to a climate exchange. We have put forward a plan of some interest, which, at the very least, deserves to be debated. Furthermore, what we need is practical action to alleviate the unavoidable and inevitable economic impact of enforcing Kyoto within our borders.

Ms. Louise Thibault (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie a question that could be considered related.

Yesterday, the government announced \$200 million for ethanol production, a process that is not very environmentally friendly. It is far from being a panacea. When we look at its production in terms of greenhouse gas emissions, I think it is worrisome. The \$200 million may be a good thing for some producers but I would like to ask the member what he thinks of this announcement in relation to the motion he has tabled this morning.

• (1035)

Mr. Bernard Bigras: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question.

I think it would be a serious mistake to put all our eggs in one basket, that is in ethanol. In my opinion, there are two problems. First, real energy gains may not be realized if we choose only this approach. Second, we must realize that the production of corn as the basic resource for ethanol production requires the significant use of pesticides that could leach into groundwater or even nearby waterways.

Of course this approach does help develop the biofuel sector. However, what we should be doing is ensuring that vehicles currently on the market are more fuel efficient. The technology does exist. Automobile manufacturing standards could readily be amended and harmonized with European or Californian standards, which would put more fuel efficient vehicles on our roads and lower greenhouse gas emissions, rather than putting all our eggs in the ethanol basket.

[*English*]

Mr. Mark Warawa (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with my colleague and good friend, a member I highly respect, the member for Louis-Hébert.

On behalf of the government, I want to thank the member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie for coming forward with his motion today.

Like the hon. member, I believe Canadians want real action on the environment. Canadians want to see climate change addressed and harmful greenhouse gas emissions reduced. They also desperately want to see greenhouse gases and air pollution reduced so that the air we breathe is cleaner.

Canadians demand leadership from their government for both a clean environment and a growing economy. Canadians also want their elected representatives and their government to act responsibly on both fronts.

In 1997 the Liberal government agreed to the Kyoto protocol. In the following nine years in government, the Liberal Party did nothing to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in Canada. While it promised big cuts to those harmful emissions, it instead sat back and watched them rise dramatically.

Let us consider the evidence. In 1997 when the Liberal government signed on to the Kyoto protocol, Canada was 22% above its target, but the good news was that we had 15 years to make it. By the time Canadians chose to change their government in 2006, Canada was already 35% above the target.

We accepted our international obligations and we will make our very best efforts. We are big believers in the need for international action.

The government has said very clearly that it is supportive of Canada remaining committed to the principles and objectives of the United Nations framework convention on climate change and the Kyoto protocol.

We would like to see more cooperation and leadership among all major emitting countries, particularly the G-8+5, which includes not only the big western economies like Britain, France, Germany and the United States, but also the big emerging economies like India and China.

Our government was elected to make decisions. The global challenge of climate change and global warming requires meaningful, decisive action. Reducing greenhouse gases and air pollution also demands leadership and resolve.

Already we have taken significant steps that not only prove our commitment to action but will also make a difference in Canada's environment for the health of all Canadians. We have unveiled a wide range of initiatives to promote clean energy and clean transportation, the two biggest sources of greenhouse gases and pollution.

We are increasing the use of renewable fuel through regulation and supporting the growth of our biofuels industry.

We are providing financial and tax incentives to Canadians to drive eco-friendly vehicles.

We will regulate mandatory fuel consumption standards on the vehicles that Canadians buy.

We are supporting the growth of renewable energy resources like wind and tidal power.

We are providing incentives to Canadians to improve the energy efficiency of their homes.

We have partnered with the province of Alberta to create an ecoenergy carbon capture and storage task force that will recommend the best ways to deploy technology to capture carbon dioxide from the oil sands and store it deep underground.

We have provided \$1.5 billion to the provinces and territories to support concrete energy efficiency technology and other projects they have identified to achieve real reduction in both air pollution and greenhouse gases.

Business of Supply

Budget 2007 also demonstrates our commitment to the environment with an investment of \$4.5 billion to clean our air and water, to manage the legacy of chemical substances, to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and, most importantly, to protect our natural environment.

Combined with over \$4.7 billion in investments made since 2006, the resulting investments in environmental protection total over \$9 billion.

However, these investments alone will not drive the changes in energy efficiency, technology, innovations and investments in industrial facilities that must occur if Canada is to do its part to reduce the global burden of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases.

• (1040)

Our focus is now on implementing tough but realistic regulations to reduce greenhouse gases and air pollution from large industrial sources while ensuring that our economy continues to prosper.

We are exploring the use of emissions trading as part of those regulations. I would remind the House it is the private sector that makes those choices and it is the private sector that should provide any trading infrastructure.

There is nothing that says there must only be one exchange here in Canada. In Europe, for example, there are several carbon exchanges. None was established by a government. I believe it was Jean-Charles Robilliard, the spokesman for the Montreal Stock Exchange, who said that there was room for both exchanges to operate in emissions trading.

Our government cannot take responsibility for the inaction and mistakes made by the previous Liberal government but we will take responsibility for cleaning up the mess that we inherited from the Liberals. By doing nothing to reduce the harmful greenhouse gas emissions, the previous government focused far too much on the economy.

While industry pushes for minimal action and the environmentalists push for perfection, the problem is getting worse. It is time for Canada's government to act, and we are acting. Soon we will unveil our regulatory framework for industrial air emissions. Our strategy will ensure real reductions in both greenhouse gases and air pollution.

We will include tougher rules and regulations that will require Canada's industry to reduce pollution that threatens the health of Canadians and that causes climate change. For the first time in our country, we will have a strategy, one that is real, concrete and realistic for reducing greenhouse gases and air pollution.

Of course, Canadians will need to make some adjustments. We all need to take on more responsibility. It is something we believe Canadians are prepared to do. Our citizens want urgent action on the environment and they are ready for some tough but fair medicine.

However, how much is too much? Where do we draw the line? Canadians expect us to deal with these issues with responsibility and balance. We also need a balanced approach that reduces both greenhouse gases and preserves Canadian economic growth.

Will everyone like our approach? Probably not. Some will say that it is too weak, while some in industry will say that it is too tough. Someone must take the lead, though, and that is the responsibility of the Government of Canada. Leadership means making tough choices. We were elected to make those tough choices on behalf of Canadians and not to duck them.

In closing, I want to remind the House once again that we agree wholeheartedly that urgent action on greenhouse gases is needed and we will be coming forward shortly with our plan.

I also want to say again that the government supports the principles and objectives of the Kyoto protocol and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Therefore, we will be supporting this motion. As for carbon markets, I have indicated in our notice of intent that we support emissions trading, and the motion does not specify that Montreal must be the only carbon market in Canada.

• (1045)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Bernard Bigras (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I was a bit surprised to hear the speech by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, particularly towards the end when he said that there could be other carbon exchanges in Canada.

Today, we were expecting the government to recognize the important role that the Montreal Stock Exchange plays with regard to derivatives.

Here is what Luc Bertrand said to the International Finance Club of Montreal on April 21, 2005:

It will not come as a shock to any of you if I tell you today that we have no intention of letting anyone take our place. We have no intention of giving up and letting go wherever it may be the expertise, the know-how and the leadership that Montreal and the province of Quebec have acquired in the area of derivatives. Since 1999, the Montreal Stock Exchange has clearly proven that it is in a better position than anyone else in Canada to serve and develop the derivatives market.

We would have expected the government to tell us that indeed Montreal had a good project and that it was an authority in this area under the 1999 agreement. We would like the government to recognize that this agreement signed with the Chicago Stock Exchange puts Montreal and the Montreal Stock Exchange in a better position than any other stock exchange in Canada.

Can the government and the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment recognize that Montreal is best suited to be the home of the climate market in Canada?

[*English*]

Mr. Mark Warawa: Mr. Speaker, the motion reads:

That the House call on the government to set fixed greenhouse gas reduction targets as soon as possible so as to meet the objectives of the Kyoto protocol, a prerequisite for the establishment, as expeditiously as possible, of a carbon exchange in Montreal.

We agree with this. The motion does not say only in Montreal. It is common knowledge that Toronto, Montreal and Winnipeg have all expressed interest. He knows well that there could be multiple people dealing with carbon trading right here in Canada.

We do support the motion as it is written and Montreal would be a contender for the market but it could be Montreal, Winnipeg and Toronto. However, we are a democracy and we are a free market. The opportunities to have trading are there and the market will decide.

I am quite surprised that the member would want to have it mandated by government that it could be only one exchange. We are a free market and the market will decide.

Mr. David McGuinty (Ottawa South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to follow up on the parliamentary secretary's closing comments in his short speech. I think I heard him refer to Canada's new government apparently being fully committed to the Kyoto protocol and, more important, the Kyoto process. I would like to put to him, on behalf of Canadians, a couple of points and get his reaction.

First, the parliamentary secretary's new government was caught giving instructions to senior officials in Nairobi to undermine the international process during its first ministerial incarnation. Then, of course, it sent in faulty reports, misleading the international community about how much we were spending in this country on actual climate change activities.

Yesterday, the Minister of the Environment ruled out participation in international carbon markets, which will seriously penalize Canadian large industrial emitters by driving up the cost of compliance and making us very uncompetitive in the international markets.

Could the parliamentary secretary help us understand in Canada how the government can possibly be taken seriously when it says that it is committed to the Kyoto protocol and to the Kyoto process?

• (1050)

Mr. Mark Warawa: Mr. Speaker, this again is from a member of the Liberal Party that signed us onto the Kyoto commitment and then did nothing about that. We saw greenhouse gas emissions go up to 35%. This is also from a member that was pleased with the announcements of a \$100 billion tax increase on Canadians which was a carbon tax in the budget.

The hon. member asked about Nairobi. The minister invited members of the opposition parties to go to Nairobi with her. She was president of the Kyoto conference at that time and she spoke and shared with the delegates in Nairobi the condition in which Canada found itself, being the new government, which was that we were 35% above the Kyoto target because the previous government had done nothing. She did invite the delegates of the opposition party to attend.

We have remained committed. We are now up to date. The former Liberal government was behind in the reporting on the Kyoto responsibilities and in the funding. We are now up to date on our reporting and our funding.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Harvey (Louis-Hébert, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am taking this opportunity to take part in the debate on the motion presented by the hon. member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, asking the government to set absolute greenhouse gas reduction targets, so as

Business of Supply

to meet the objectives of the Kyoto protocol and, ultimately, to establish a carbon exchange in Montreal.

Greenhouse gas emissions in Canada have constantly been increasing over the past 10 years and now exceed by 35% the targets set under the Kyoto protocol. This is a direct result of the inaction of the previous Liberal government, which claims to be the great protector of the environment.

More than 13 years ago, when it had the opportunity to produce results, it missed the target. In order to reach the targets set by the previous government in the Kyoto protocol, Canada would have to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by an average of 33% for each of the years covered by the commitment made under the Kyoto protocol.

As the Minister of the Environment said last week, before the Senate committee, achieving such drastic reductions over such a short period of time would require very compelling measures that would have a significant impact on the Canadian economy. We are talking about increased production costs for businesses and the possible loss of 275,000 jobs, not to mention higher energy costs, including natural gas, electricity and gasoline.

• (1055)

[*English*]

We know the Liberals have tried to scare Canadians by misrepresenting the report but the facts are clear and have been independently validated by some leading Canadian economists and experts.

Some members of the opposition have also tried to mislead Canadians. For example, they have said that the report issued by U. K. economist, Sir Nicholas Stern, debunks the report on Bill C-288. Sadly, they are wrong.

While the Stern review is an important study that we should all read, it focused on the cost of global climate change action over the next 30 to 50 years. It has almost nothing to do with the cost Canada would face to implement Kyoto over the next five years, which Bill C-288 would require by law.

Our report on Bill C-288 takes into consideration Canada's unique circumstance. It is the only up to date report in existence that reflects the reality of our geography, demographics and economy.

[*Translation*]

Some opposition members would want us to ignore the socio-economic effects of attempts to reach the targets of the Kyoto protocol. However, as a government, we must act responsibly and adopt measures that are based on a balanced commitment between protecting the environment and managing the economy.

We recognize that the environment is the number one concern for Canadians. We share that concern and this is why, as soon as the new Government of Canada took office, we immediately introduced a number of initiatives that will not only clean up our environment, but will also protect the health of Canadians.

In October, we stated our intention to develop and implement regulations and other measures to reduce air pollution and tackle the issue of climate change.

Business of Supply

[English]

The government is working to set targets for industrial greenhouse gas emission reductions that will be more aggressive than those proposed by previous governments. We are working on setting short term targets for industrial air pollutants, reductions that are among the most aggressive in the world.

[Translation]

Rather than do as the previous Liberal government did and announce unrealistic and unreachable targets, our government is focusing on setting targets that will strengthen Canada's long-term competitiveness. These targets are a major positive step forward in the fight to reduce dangerous emissions, air pollutants and greenhouse gases.

Canada's new government will soon announce a regulatory framework that will give industry clear guidance for reducing greenhouse gases. The framework will include emissions credit trading. Currently, there is nothing preventing Canadian exchanges from creating carbon exchanges similar to those now operating in Chicago or in Europe.

Canadians will soon learn more about our environmental plan, which will set achievable targets to improve the quality of the air Canadians breathe and enable Canada to take its place as an international leader in the fight against climate change. Our plan will include a commitment to developing integrated regulations governing outdoor air pollutants and greenhouse gases. It will set performance standards concerning products that may release air pollutants when they are in use.

Our approach will avoid regulatory overlap and support the development of national standards to eliminate emissions into the atmosphere. This government is committed to making environmental progress while managing the economy. We must ensure that regional economies will not be annihilated in the process. We are determined to find solutions without creating new problems. We will establish mandatory reduction targets for big industries that produce greenhouse gases. These targets will be strict and will become stricter over the years. As a result, Canada will achieve absolute greenhouse gas emissions reductions, reductions that all Canadians and opposition members will be able to support.

This government is already headed in the right direction, I believe, in view of all the environmental initiatives it has introduced over the last few months. These initiatives bear out our promise to provide solutions that will protect the health of Canadians and their environment. We obviously take our promise very seriously, as can be seen in the implementation of financial and tax incentives to encourage Canadians to drive green vehicles and the support provided to sources of renewable energy, such as wind and tidal power. We are also giving Canadians incentives to improve the energy efficiency of their homes.

Recently in the 2007 budget, we announced a \$4.5 billion investment to help clean up our air and water, manage chemical substances, protect our natural environment and reduce our greenhouse gas emissions. This investment plus more than \$4.7 billion in others add up in total to more than a \$9 billion investment in the environment.

As we have said on many occasions, Canadians are very interested in their environment. They constantly demand that steps be taken to clean it up. Before our new government took power, though, nothing was done in response to these demands. Now our government is taking concrete action, as can be seen in the examples I just enumerated. We know, though, that a lot more needs to be done in order to ensure that future generations have a clean environment.

Air pollutants and greenhouse gases have many sources in common, and that is why we are taking a coordinated, integrated approach to protecting the health of Canadians and their environment. The federal government not only intends to make major reductions in emissions but promises as well to monitor emissions and report on them in a completely transparent, public, responsible way in order to ensure that the announced reductions are actually achieved.

Regardless of their political allegiance, all members of a government should strive to achieve the objective of improving and protecting the quality of the air we breathe.

• (1100)

Everyone has a responsibility to take action on climate change, and the Canada's new government is clearly doing this.

Mr. Bernard Bigras (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for taking part in this important debate on the Bloc Québécois opposition day. I have a few questions for him, including some questions about reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Does the member believe that there should be absolute greenhouse gas reduction targets rather than intensity-based targets? In other words, in a future Canadian plan, should we generate real greenhouse gas reductions, as the Kyoto protocol calls for, or should we favour intensity targets, which give polluters a break and spare industry and large emitters of greenhouse gases?

Should we favour an approach that calls for absolute emission reductions, or should we favour an intensity-based approach?

Mr. Luc Harvey: Mr. Speaker, it is clear that, with Canada's greenhouse gas emission levels currently more than 35% over the Kyoto targets, we are a long way from reduction targets. In addition, the Canadian economy is continuing to increase its greenhouse gas emissions. Still, we support and believe in the principle of Kyoto and assure Canadians that we will work to reduce greenhouse gases throughout Canada.

I would remind my colleague, who sits with me on the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development, that we heard dozens of witnesses. We asked them whether it was possible to meet the Kyoto targets by 2012, the proposed deadline. They all agreed—and I could let him give the answer himself—that it was impossible to meet that target by 2012. That concludes what I had to say on this issue.

• (1105)

[English]

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from the Bloc for moving this motion and for his question to my hon. Conservative colleague. It was a very clear and specific question. Perhaps I will ask it in the other official language and we will have a clearer response.

Does my colleague's party favour an absolute target, or does his party favour intensity based targets? The reason he and his party need to provide a clear answer on this question is because the whole premise of not just the motion that has been presented to us today but the premise of emissions trading, of exchanges, that was suggested by the Montreal group, used in Chicago, and predominantly used in Europe, is only based on absolute targets.

We simply cannot support intensity targets, which I know his party has said it supports many times in public and in testimony and also support an exchange as has been described in Montreal at the same time. It is like saying we support the Geneva Convention and then hand over prisoners for torture. We cannot support the two things at the same time.

The government has said it will support this motion. Certainly, my hon. colleagues sound like they are supportive of it. If we look at this particular motion, absolute versus intensity are two completely philosophically and practically different options for the country.

My last point is that the companies and the witnesses the member spoke of told us very clearly that they need clear rules in order to do the investments required to reduce greenhouse gas production. Without those clear rules, they simply will not make the investments.

I have a very clear question for my colleague. Does his party favour absolute targets, yes or no? If yes, maybe he can describe what those are.

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Harvey: Mr. Speaker, announcements will be made this week about the reduction targets we will have in Canada. I therefore ask my colleague to be patient for another day or two.

[English]

Mr. David McGuinty (Ottawa South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise this morning to speak to the Bloc Québécois motion tabled today. I am hoping it will lead to a very fulsome and honest debate. I am not overly encouraged by some of the things I am hearing from the government, but I am pleased, as I said, to rise to speak to this motion put forward by the hon. member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie.

Let me preface my comments today by saying that I was very disappointed by the environment minister's remarks last week before a Senate committee examining Bill C-288, the Kyoto implementa-

Business of Supply

tion act. The minister's remarks dealt with the subject we are debating today: the need to meet the objectives of the Kyoto protocol.

Bill C-288 restates Canada's commitment to the Kyoto process. The government signed the treaty. Parliament ratified it.

Now that Bill C-288 has passed through the House of Commons, the democratically elected House of Commons has shown twice and for all time that we are fully committed to this goal.

The minister's comments were defeatist. His confused rhetoric talked about a "more realistic" way forward. What he meant was that he is not willing to show any leadership whatsoever. He could not get the job done and neither could his predecessor who was summarily dispatched for failure for doing anything in the first year of this government's short life.

The new minister tabled a dishonest economic analysis that refuted a plan to meet Kyoto that no one is proposing anywhere in the world.

If the government were serious about analyzing economic possibilities, it would not have done it on the back of a napkin. The Department of Finance would have been engaged and would have done the job, or at least would have been involved in some small way. But that was not the case at all. Its analysis would have included benefits, as well as costs, to come up with a reasonable conclusion and we would have seen that Kyoto is not only feasible but economically sound.

[Translation]

We should not overlook the fact that the Conservatives have been trying for years to prevent the implementation of concrete measures to fight climate change. We are asking the Prime Minister to ensure that Canada joins the rest of the world in significantly reducing carbon emissions. Let us remember that, when the Prime Minister was the leader of the official opposition, he wrote a letter to his supporters to raise money and to "block the job-killing, economy-destroying Kyoto accord". In his letter, the Prime Minister makes his views on the Kyoto protocol perfectly clear: "Kyoto is essentially a socialist scheme to suck money out of wealth-producing nations".

• (1110)

[English]

Yes, the Prime Minister described Kyoto, the protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, signed by 168 nation states, as a socialist plot. It is hard to believe. It is actually outrageous, ludicrous and ridiculous.

There has been some very serious scientific and economic work done only recently. Scientists have established that global warming is real and caused in large part by human activity. Economists have worked to demonstrate what strategies we can take to fight climate change.

Business of Supply

In keeping with past behaviour among those who would deny climate change and drag their feet, it is interesting how, when we look back at the familiar pattern of conduct over the years, those who would have us not respond to such environmental challenges rallied first around the case of acid rain when Inco in Canada was the largest single source of acid rain, causing emissions in North America. Inco, once regulated, went on to become one of the most efficient companies in North America, leading the way and taking credit now for significant environmental achievement.

Then it was followed with the United States clean air act and the example there, where U.S. electrical utilities denied the need to take action and hollered and shouted to the sky that the atmosphere itself would collapse if they had to put a price on their emissions. We now know that industry's estimates, in terms of the costs per tonne of acid rain causing emissions, were \$1,500. The United States Environmental Protection Agency was predicting \$750. Only several years later, when these tonnes of pollution were being traded in a domestic emissions trading system in the United States under the U.S. clean air act, the real cost was about \$100 per tonne.

Finally, the third example of a familiar pattern of conduct is the Montreal protocol and our global efforts to eliminate CFCs. This engaged one major company, DuPont, that went on to eliminate the lion's share of the problem and became a significant environmental player in the industrial world around the world. It went on to reduce its greenhouse gases.

What is interesting were the comments made by the Prime Minister himself on March 22, less than a month ago. I quote the Prime Minister when he said:

In 1990 my predecessor, Brian Mulroney, convinced the US government to sign a treaty requiring industry to drastically cut sulphur and nitrogen oxide emissions.

The alarmists said this would bring about a terrible recession.

Quite the contrary, the North American economy thrived, posting one of the longest and strongest periods of growth in history.

That was said by the Prime Minister of Canada four short weeks ago, just before he dispatched his Minister of the Environment to use shock and awe communications tactics to try to frighten Canadians into believing we could not achieve our Kyoto protocol targets.

The House will recall, and so will Canadians, the Stern report, which was conducted by the esteemed former Chief Economist of the World Bank, Sir Nicholas Stern, the man now teaching at the London School of Economics, my alma mater. In his time at the World Bank, Sir Nicholas Stern was hardly ever conceived of or seen as a socialist economist who would pursue a socialist plot to strip the north and the industrialized countries of their wealth.

Sir Stern's widely accepted report concluded that 10% of global output could be lost if we allowed our actions to raise temperatures by 5° over the coming century. In other words, if I can paraphrase the 681 page report of Sir Nicholas Stern, we are looking at the mother and the father of all market corrections if we wait until we are forced to take real substantive climate action.

•(1115)

I have long said that we must stop the fiction, that we can continue to expect our biosphere to assimilate unlimited amounts of waste without consequence. Much of our economic activity is

financed by the DNA bank of nature, where the accumulated capital of 500 million years of evolution is on deposit. We need a new economics that values and in many cases gives a dollar value to our natural capital.

We measure our financial capital. We measure our social capital. We even measure our human capital. How well educated we are. It is time for us now to move, take the final step and start to assign a value to our natural capital, and Kyoto is essential to this evolution.

The World Bank reports that carbon markets were worth \$10 billion in 2005 and slated to triple in value this past year. We are looking at a market of hundreds of billions of dollars at the very least. According to Deutsche Bank, one of the largest investment banks in the world ranked by revenues and profits, a fully operational international carbon market would surpass in size every single stock exchange on the planet today.

This is why the Minister of the Environment received a pointed letter from the president of the Toronto Exchange, Richard Nesbitt, on December 21, four months ago, in which he made it clear that Canada must be involved in an international emissions trading system.

We must not turn our back on free market mechanisms. Free markets are well known for encouraging behaviour in the most cost efficient way possible. I can say that the opposition has been in favour of this approach every step of the way, provided of course that emissions reductions can be properly verified.

However, the minister has made it clear as recently as yesterday, once again, that Canadian businesses will remain on the outside looking in as long as the Conservatives have their way. The government by denying that there is a problem will ensure that Canadian businesses and average citizens end up paying much more than they have to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions.

In short, we will become, under the present government, policy and price takers, not policy and price makers, something heretofore reserved almost exclusively for the governments of Australia and the United States of America. Is it only coincidence that the only country not to sign the G-8+5 memorandum, just three short weeks ago, was the United States, trying not to participate in the multilateral and emerging Kyoto based international emissions trading systems?

[Translation]

Every family understands the importance of a budget. Income and expenditures must be balanced. If we save, we can invest in our future. It is time to adopt such a strategy in order to reduce carbon emissions.

A balanced carbon budget is an innovative and bold plan enabling large industrial emitters to reduce, in a tangible and significant way, their carbon emissions. Our plan provides a concrete and effective strategy for significant reductions in carbon emissions. It will also serve to stimulate the development of green technologies here in Canada. We know that our businesses will seize the opportunity to promote environmental technologies and that Canada will seize the opportunity to become a green superpower.

Business of Supply

•(1120)

[English]

Our companies are aching to take advantage of a new green economy, but only if they have certainty and clarity. They need to know in which direction our country is moving, especially those that have moved so aggressively to reduce their emissions of those greenhouse gases since 1990, like the pulp and paper sector in our country, which is already 44% below its 1990 collective greenhouse gas emissions, using 1990 as the baseline.

It has been three and a half weeks since Liberal, Bloc Québécois and NDP amendments to the clean air act were passed to set tough but realistic targets for absolute emissions reductions.

Yesterday the minister was saying that he still had not made up his mind about whether we would ever see the clean air and climate change act again. However, he certainly made up his mind to spend millions of dollars hiring economists to mount a case to frighten Canadians to the greatest extent possible, telling us again what we could not do, rather than what we could do.

Meanwhile, behind closed doors this last weekend, he was saying that the clean air act was dead. Then yesterday, in the national media, he denied having said so. That is no way to provide certainty. That is no way to provide clarity. That is no way to provide leadership.

The retrofitted clean air and climate change act has so much to offer. Cast in the form of a national carbon budget, our commitment to the Kyoto process will allow us to create a green economy, an economy that profits from the move, the shift to sustainability.

We have already achieved substantial reductions in emissions on an intensity basis, something the government continues to pursue and refuses to acknowledge that if we adjust for growth in the economy, that is, if we look at greenhouse gas emissions on an intensity basis, our emissions fell over 10% from 1993 to 2004. Now we know the reductions have to be in absolute terms. It is non-negotiable. We are not addressing climate change unless we are reducing the amount of CO₂ and CO₂ equivalent gases that we pump into the atmosphere.

[Translation]

We must act now. We cannot fight climate change with a strategy that deliberately plans for an increase, rather than a decrease, in pollution.

This government wants to make Canadians believe that it is doing what is required to combat climate change, but it is incapable of making the necessary decisions.

It is time to give industry a carbon budget and to develop a policy that establishes the financial incentives required for this budget to work. That is exactly what we did with our amendments to Bill C-30.

[English]

Yesterday in the House the Prime Minister almost had me in guffaws of laughter when he actually said that if the opposition had a plan to meet Kyoto it should table it. Members can check *Hansard*. He actually said that.

The plan that we have delivered for the country, a positive, workable strategy to fight greenhouse gases in a cost effective way, is in the government's own clean air and climate change act. The government asked for a solution. It referred the bill to a special, powerful legislative committee to have it completely reworked.

It was reworked. The Conservatives got a plan, a real made in Canada plan, from the opposition parties. It makes real reductions, absolute ones, not intensity based. It puts a price on carbon. It sets short term, mid term and long term targets for the country.

It does everything that the government should have been working to do from day one, and it goes further, because for months the government has been trying to frighten Canadians, misleading them into believing that this involves somehow transferring billions of dollars to purchase hot air. The bill was fixed again. Hot air purchases from any jurisdiction have been expressly ruled out.

Instead, we have had delays, we have had distractions and we have had excuses. I do not think it is a coincidence that the only speech the current Minister of the Environment has posted on the Environment Canada website in three months, actually four months now, is all about what we cannot do. It exaggerates the costs. It ignores the benefits. It is a vision that wants to fail. It is a defeatist speech.

This week, the government has once again promised us action, but I can tell members that we do not need regulation that ignores the principles of innovation and refuses to cooperate with 168 partners around the world. We need to buy into a system that leverages Canada's intellectual powerhouses: our research and development institutes, our universities, and our federal, provincial and municipal R and D.

There are massive billions of dollars of research, development and innovation in these intellectual powerhouses. We need to harness these powerhouses to move forward.

We know that we Canadians led the world as the driving force behind the Brundtland commission and the earth summit. Both of these were, of course, the foundations of the Kyoto protocol. It is time for us to take the reins of leadership again. We can become the clean energy superpower. We need to be able to deliver our know-how to the other 98% of the world. The opportunity is clearly there.

Thanks to Kyoto, markets elsewhere now price carbon. This integrates economic and environmental imperatives for the first time. Pricing carbon enhances measurement and management of a product that ought to be scarce: our emissions. As well, it allows private operations to efficiently invest to reduce emissions. However, it will not happen here with a fearmongering government that does not believe we need to act and get out in front of the issue.

Business of Supply

I am here and my Liberal colleagues are on board because we will not accept defeatism. There will be costs, but there will also be great opportunities. We cannot afford to keep our foot off the pedal any longer.

Finally, let me say this for those who mischaracterize multilateral action as an unjustified transfer of billions of dollars offshore: they need to go back to biology 101. There is only one atmosphere, something I am regularly reminding the government of so that it can actually make the right choices.

Those are my comments. I look forward to the debate.

• (1125)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Bernard Bigras (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I wish to thank my colleague for taking part in this important debate. In connection with the motion we are debating today, I would like him to explain to us why it is important, today, to adopt absolute greenhouse gas reduction targets.

When it comes to implementing the Kyoto protocol, we have a duty to be clear to the people of Quebec and Canada so that we can commit to some real greenhouse gas reductions. According to several studies currently circulating within the federal government, a 15% intensity-based reduction would result in a 179% increase in greenhouse gases in the oil sands sector alone; and enforcement of an intensity-based 15% reduction would result in a 46% increase in greenhouse gas emissions in the oil and gas sector.

Why is it important to adopt, here in Canada, absolute greenhouse gas reduction targets?

Mr. David McGuinty: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

It is important to have absolute targets because it is crucial for Canada to have clear and definite targets, especially for the 700 largest emitters in Canada. These emitters belong to three major industrial sectors and they are seeking targets they can work with.

It also helps, because judging by the U.S. experience with their system of domestic trading permits established further to their Clean Air Act, absolute targets ensure certainty regarding prices—for example, the price of a tonne of sulfuric dioxide—and they also provide certainty for the big emitters of chemicals that cause acid rain.

• (1130)

[*English*]

It is also important because science is now telling us, especially in the wake of the Paris and Brussels meetings, that if we see even a 2° increase in temperature, as Sir Nicholas Stern has warned us, absolute targets are indispensable or we may see a 10% cost in our collective international global GDP. This is very serious business. Unfortunately, these numbers were not factored in by the government in last week's analysis.

Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to make a comment and ask a question of my hon. colleague.

My comment is that the comment on the socialist plan to use trading systems to reduce greenhouse gas emissions is really nonsense. The social democratic countries around the world have the best record in dealing with the reduction of the greenhouse gas emissions, whether it is Germany, Sweden or Denmark. They have done it through very concentrated efforts in their own countries to reduce energy use and to move to alternative energy sources. They have been effective. Social democratic principles applied to greenhouse gas reductions work very well and the weight of evidence is there in the world.

On the question of emissions reductions, in the oil and gas sector quite clearly Natural Resources Canada says that the emissions intensity of the product we are producing in Canada is going up, whether we like it or not. The sources of natural gas and oil are going to be more carbon intensive. That is a fact.

When we look at emissions reductions and alternatives, what are we going to look at? Is it going to be exporting raw bitumen to the United States to take that problem into another country so that we do not use emissions in its transformation to a usable fuel? Do we import liquefied natural gas and push the emissions from that production offshore as well? Or do we in Canada sit down and do the companion piece to a greenhouse gas strategy, which is a national energy strategy?

Would the member opposite support the effort that we need to understand how our energy system works and how we can make changes in the future? Without it, the potential to achieve Kyoto is limited.

Mr. David McGuinty: Mr. Speaker, for years I have been calling for a national energy examination in this country, not a national energy policy program of the kind that is often referred to from the 1970s, and intelligent jurisdictions, wealthy, leading industrialized jurisdictions, have already performed these analyses. It was done by the United Kingdom. It was done by Germany. It was done by France. It has been done by Australia. It has even been done by the United States, but not by Canada.

The government is not coming clean with Canadians and talking about how we are going to have to reconcile, obviously, our need to continue to do good business in the fossil fuel sector and our need and our imperative to reduce our greenhouse gases.

One thing is for sure, though, in that it is astonishing for most Canadians to think that the Conservative Party of Canada, now forming this minority government, would rule out the use of market mechanisms. It is supposed to be the party of the free market.

It is now deliberately ruling out the use of international trading mechanisms, which were brought into the Kyoto protocol largely through the demand of American, Canadian and global multinationals that want to harness the use of a free market mechanism to reduce the costs of compliance. They want to take action. They want to move forward. They want to become more energy efficient. They want to sell their environmental technologies that are forthcoming.

The oil sands are filled with environmental technologies that we ought to be selling all over the planet, yet the government is telling the free market in this country that it is not prepared and will not allow them to join the ranks of the international community, 168 countries that signed on to participate, and use this tool more efficiently. It is astonishing for those of us who are trying to understand this. It makes no sense. It is seriously disadvantaging Canada.

• (1135)

Mr. Alan Tonks (York South—Weston, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I know the House shares my opinion that the member, through his long experience, is very well informed on all of these issues related to the environment.

I would like to ask him, though, in order that we do not get divided on this road to Kyoto that we are all committed to—and through this motion we can achieve that—would he make a comment with respect to where an emissions trading carbon exchange should be located? It has been suggested in the motion, and it is linked, that it should be in Montreal, and perhaps it should, but would he give an opinion to the House with respect to the process we might undergo in order that we do the right thing with respect to this particular part of the Kyoto regime, the emissions and carbon trading system?

Mr. David McGuinty: Mr. Speaker, the first comment I would make with respect to the location of any emissions trading market would be this. If the Conservative government holds this country to a mere domestic emissions trading system, that is, with a small number of traders, we are going to have a very illiquid market and a very small market. I can assure the House and all Canadians that no matter where it is located, in Montreal, Vancouver, Toronto or elsewhere, this market would be so small as to be almost insignificant. If we are not participating more fulsomely in the international markets, then it is going to be difficult for us.

The second comment I would make is this. In Europe a number of markets have emerged. There is of course a primary trading market in London. There is a market emerging in Amsterdam. There are tertiary markets now that are coming up in Germany and elsewhere. Italy is now examining a small market in Rome. This is going to become, once it is up and fully running, the largest single market that the planet has ever seen: international carbon markets. There will be a lot of room in this country for perhaps a location in Montreal and perhaps another location in Toronto.

Finally, it is difficult for some Canadians to understand why we would situate such a market in the city of Montreal. If in fact the Bloc Québécois is still now pursuing a policy of independence, why would that market remain in Montreal if it is to serve all of Canada?

Mr. John Williams (Edmonton—St. Albert, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have a simple question. The hon. member has been talking

Business of Supply

about the U.K. economist Sir Nicholas Stern, who has reported on his opinions about where we are going for the next 30 to 50 years. However, the member has been using these analyses for his own particular benefit—over the next three to five years—in the application of the Kyoto accord. Therefore, I want to know why he would take the report by Sir Nicholas Stern and twist it to try to substantiate his facts when they are totally different from what was proposed by Sir Nicholas Stern.

Mr. David McGuinty: Mr. Speaker, I am not sure if I can respond to that question directly because I am not sure how I am not citing Sir Nicholas Stern accurately, but I would suggest to my hon. friend and colleague that he ought to look at the latest McKinsey report.

It concludes that greenhouse gas reductions needed by 2030 to avoid a 2° average warming effect could be as low as 40 euros or roughly \$60 Canadian per tonne. These are price points in the marketplace now in the European trading market and the emerging Chicago-based United States market and global markets and are very much in keeping with what is going on.

The study also concludes that the annual worldwide costs for making the needed emissions reductions to avoid worse climate change in 2030 is only 0.6% of that year's projected GDP.

I would perhaps place more credence in these numbers from the McKinsey firm than in those of the few economists selected last week by the government. These numbers are actually very much in keeping with Sir Nicholas Stern's report.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie for his motion on climate change, especially concerning the carbon exchange. This concept is really necessary for our country, which should make an immediate commitment to emission trading. Otherwise, it will be impossible for Canada to meet the Kyoto targets and to continue discussions with the rest of the world.

The government is somewhat confused because I believe that the government will support this motion. However, it is possible that the confusion is caused by language. The French version contains some very specific elements that do not appear in the English version. Therefore, we should closely examine the French text today. First, there is this sentence:

Que la Chambre invite le gouvernement à établir au plus tôt des cibles absolues de réduction des gaz à effet de serre permettant d'atteindre les objectifs du Protocole de Kyoto—

The words “cibles absolues”, or “absolute targets” are very important, and they are the reason that the NDP will support this motion.

• (1140)

[*English*]

The English version has a slightly but important different expression that is important for us to rectify here today. I know members in the House will work with us to perhaps fix this.

The motion reads:

That the House call on the government to set fixed greenhouse gas reduction targets as soon as possible so as to meet the objectives of the Kyoto Protocol—

Business of Supply

The language around the mechanisms in Kyoto is very specific in its use and phrasing. In English, the government may be reading in some cover for its intensity based targets because the word "absolute" is not applied. In the language of Kyoto, absolute targets mean an absolute cap. That is the common reference that we use when talking about large industrial polluters.

It is also the language that we use when we talk about an absolute target for countries, not a moving target, not a target associated to energy intensity, which was previously supported by the current leader of the Liberal Party and his party in the former Parliament. This intensity based target was supported actually by the current leader of the Liberal Party all the way through his leadership campaign. These are the same criticisms the Liberal Party is now vaunting upon the Conservatives, that an intensity based target was the way to go.

Let me explore this topic for a moment because it is important for Canadians listening to understand the differences between an absolute target and an intensity based target.

Intensity allows a country to set intensity based targets. That means if a country becomes more efficient in its business processes and industrial process, if that intensity improves over years, then that country gets credit for having improved when it comes to greenhouse gas emissions.

The problem with an intensity based target is that it can allow, under an expanding economy, and as we have seen in Alberta that attempted this in its provincial targets, an improvement of 19% in intensity over a 10 year period, but an increase of almost 40% in the absolute greenhouse gas emissions for the province.

When countries come together at international conferences to talk about reducing our impact on the planet and the planet's atmosphere, what they are always talking about is an absolute reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. That is the only conversation held. It does not matter one's political perspective on the topic, right, left, American, Australian, or Canadian. They are talking about seeking a way to lower the amount of greenhouse gas emissions that are sent out by our industrial processes. That is the critical component of this.

This issue seems to have been a bit of a moving target over the last number of weeks. The government says we are within the Kyoto protocol, but we are not going to meet the targets.

[*Translation*]

Now, it is suggested that we support the Bloc motion to have absolute targets for reduction of greenhouse gases. The words "absolute targets" are very, very clear. They establish a very strong connection with the Kyoto protocol and Canada's international commitments. It is also necessary to establish a carbon exchange in Montreal, or a general carbon exchange, wherever it may be located.

• (1145)

[*English*]

In the context of all this, as we have heard in the speeches from the environment critics and the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, the parties will take out their natural barbs and hooks for each other around the issue of the environment, which has become increasingly important for Canadians.

There has been almost a seismic shift in the consciousness of Canadians who are interested in the affairs of government and their nation to say that the environment, and climate change in particular, has become one of the leading issues for our country.

I would strongly suggest the government did not get elected on an environmental platform. I clearly remember the platform document the Conservatives ran on. I think there were three phrases in the entire document devoted to the environment. It was a platform piece. The Conservatives were vague. There was something in it about clean air and clean water, and a third one that has since been forgotten.

Now arriving in government, those members find themselves in a bit of a predicament, having spilled much ink in their brochures and pamphlets about the evils of international obligations like the Kyoto process, and are now faced with a population that wants something done.

To take some small pieces in lessons from history, when the Conservatives introduced their clean air act last fall, there was much excitement and anticipation by many in the Conservative cabinet at least, but I am not sure about the Canadian public. Minister after minister came to me and said how impressed I was about to be with what was going to be called the clean air act.

[*Translation*]

It was the clean air act. According to them it was very strong, very specific and very generous.

[*English*]

At the end of the day we found out that the act was wanting in specifics, deadlines and lacking in efficacy. We were unable to support the act and were able to encourage the other opposition parties in the House to do the same because there was almost no moral ground to stand upon in pushing off serious action in respect to climate change for another 20 years, 30 years or 40 years. That was not responsible.

What is responsible is to recommit to our international obligations, a legally binding document which we have not heard a murmur from the government on how it is going to square this circle in being signatories, which it is in representing the Canadian people, to this protocol that has built-in penalties for countries that do not abide by that signature or their targets.

The government is trying to square the idea that it can both be in the protocol, adhere to international obligations, and yet not meet those obligations. It is fundamentally flawed and intellectually dishonest at worst.

When the act was introduced, it was dead on arrival. It was disappointing and frustrating because the legacy that the Liberal Party had left behind in government was known throughout the land as being a record of an over concentration and focus on media and optics, spin and announcements, and little to do with concrete action.

Business of Supply

The sad part of this conversation for Canadians, and there is a great deal of skepticism in the public when the government makes announcements, is that they have some justification for the skepticism when looking at the so-called new government because after some 13 months or 14 months, some incredibly long feeling period of time short on the calendar but long when we look at the amount of delay, we are still waiting for serious action.

It may feel beyond even 10 years for some in the Liberal Party who are not quite used to the feelings of what it is not to be able to control the media's spin cycle. However, when we look at the principles of their bill, we realize that the bill as proposed was dead in Parliament.

I remember the leader of the NDP, the member for Toronto—Danforth standing in his place, two weeks after the bill was introduced calling upon the government and the other parties to work together, to form a special committee, give us a forum to bring the best ideas forward, and to rewrite the bill from top to bottom in order to include within it things that are called for by the motion from the Bloc today, and other motions that have come from Conservative and Liberal members.

It was a fascinating experience and important because Canadians heard stories of parliamentarians attempting to work together, of finding common ground. Looking through the record, as I have, for the various votes cast for this particular piece of legislation, I found members from the Conservatives, Liberals, Bloc and New Democrats voting for many aspects of it. They did not agree with all of it, but they say the principles of a good negotiation are always based upon each party giving up something. No one gets it all.

As much as the Prime Minister would like to wage a war of attrition and decide that whatever he writes is law, he must come to the realization that he is working within the confines of a minority Parliament. This is the House that Canadians constructed for us and most clearly want us to work together, particularly around issues that we have said from all four corners of the House go beyond narrow partisan interests because it is the future of the environment, the climate and future prosperity of generations to come.

We rewrote the bill and adopted aspects of the bill that were written initially. Much of the actual air pollution sections, the air quality sections, were modified but adopted by the various committee members. We included new pieces, leading edge ideas, that have been accepted by the parties and no one party voted for every one and no one party voted against every piece. It was a mix.

To my perspective, and I believe the perspective of many Canadians, that is the sign of a healthy Parliament, a healthy debate, when people are able to give their input and have various coalitions form around the table on any given day. As members from that committee know, there were various votes cast. Some things were defeated and some things not. To make Parliament work, to make Parliament deliver for Canadians on the environment, that is what the NDP was focused on. That is what the member for Toronto—Danforth, the leader of the NDP, was entirely focused on through the process and he has received proper credit for his work there.

● (1150)

I will now break down the notion of a carbon exchange market.

[*Translation*]

It is very important to understand to what extent this tool is good for Canadian companies and for everyone, and that it will make it possible to advance this concept of greenhouse gas reduction.

I will quote a brief extract from the testimony of Mr. Bertrand, the president of the Montreal Exchange, on the subject of absolute targets. In response to a question from the member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, Mr. Bertrand stated the following: “We think that an intensity-based system would add another element of uncertainty to the market.”

All the business witnesses said that it was impossible to invest in the reduction of greenhouse gases with a system that creates uncertainty. The concept of intensity targets does not work for Canadian companies or for our country's Kyoto targets. It is not possible for the Conservative government, on one hand, to say that intensity targets are sufficient and, on the other hand, to support the motion of the member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie which begins, “That the House call on the government to set fixed greenhouse gas reduction targets as soon as possible so as to meet the objectives of the Kyoto Protocol—”.

That is the intention of Bill C-30. They have changed the name because it is a very important bill that deals not only with air quality, but also with climate change. That is the reason that the NDP will support the motion. It will support the effort to put more pressure on this government. It is necessary to ensure the passage of Bill C-30 concerning climate change and Canada's clean air act, as it has been called by the government.

[*English*]

For Canadians watching who are not familiar with carbon exchange markets, it is a very simple concept based fundamentally upon market concepts that exist. Canadians invest in the markets every day, for their retirement, for businesses to secure enough capital to make the investments, create an economy, hire more people and put Canadians to work. The market based system, the exchange of value for future promised value that is the basis of the Toronto Stock Exchange and other stock exchanges around the world is the same concept that was borrowed from those trying to fight this climate change process.

A very wise witness came before the committee and said not to think of the Kyoto process as an environmental negotiation as much as it is an economic negotiation because this is changing some of the fundamentals of our economy. It is demanding that at long last the polluter must pay. This is a concept that has been banded around in this Parliament and others for far too long. It is simple. The concept says that those who pollute, in this case those who emit greenhouse gases into the atmosphere, must pay for that pollution, otherwise we invoke the greatest tragedy we have ever known. Who is responsible for the atmosphere, who is responsible for the quality of the air if not those who are contributing to the ruination of the atmosphere and the quality of air?

Business of Supply

It seems to us and to many others that this market based approach is one of the most effective tools that government can apply in setting up the terms of reference, in setting up clear rules and regulations so that companies can compete. It will allow industries to choose the lowest cost solutions to reduce their pollution and have a net overall benefit to our atmosphere and our economy.

At the end of the day, in order to achieve the short term targets that are outlined in the Kyoto protocol, and to which Canada has obligated itself, unless the government plans on tearing up the protocol, which it may be doing quietly but has certainly not publicly said it will do, then we need this tool. Businesses which are unable to make the transition in three to four years, which is Kyoto's requirement now because we have wasted so much time in the 13 years previously and in the almost year and a half with the present government, need this tool.

We have made some shift with the government. There has been some release of the ideology in small ways. I can remember the minister coming to the committee and when asked about the clean development mechanisms and other trading mechanisms that are available within the protocol, he said absolutely and definitively no.

At the time I thought he may have misspoke himself. It was not until we saw business representative after representative come before the committee and say they want access to these tools. The oil and gas sector, the coal fired energy sector are saying they want access to these tools and mechanisms because they think it is important and useful for their business. They need to be able to factor into their spreadsheets and costs of doing business the concept of pollution, the concept of greenhouse gas emissions. The notions of a carbon exchange allow them to do that and they want access to it. Why would the government deny them? They are supposedly much of the government's support base, certainly within the Alberta energy sector. They asked for access to this market. It becomes a question of who the government is defending from these tools. It is certainly not the companies that are most involved with the process, the large polluters in this country.

The government made an absolutely false and almost silly presentation on the cost of these international obligations to which we have committed. The minister was out trumpeting that last week. That needs to be set aside once and for all. We can no longer have this pitched battle of ideology between doing things for the environment and doing things for the economy. That debate for many Canadians is long since over. If the government continues to wage this campaign and die on this hill, I believe both politically and personally the Conservatives will be punished for it because it is a false debate. We have moved well beyond that. Our international competitors have shown us that.

• (1155)

Canada runs the desperate risk of being left in the dust in innovation, new energy production, and a more sensible and sane policy for this country and for our economy.

We will be supporting this motion and look forward to the support of all parties. We look for support from all parties to finally move forward the so-called clean air and climate change legislation, so that we can get the solutions on the table that will allow industry and

Canadians to engage with government and not have a government in direct opposition to those efforts.

• (1200)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Bernard Bigras (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague and congratulate him for his speech today.

Clearly the colleague opposite knows how the emission credit exchange mechanisms work better than the minister and better than all the government critics.

I would remind my colleague, and the government, that a recent study by the CIBC, published less than a month ago, shows that the potential carbon credit market would be somewhere in the order of \$12 billion a year. This is in addition to the possible \$77 billion internationally.

In his opinion, does this not further show that there are certain economic advantages and certain economic opportunities for Canadian companies in establishing this emissions credit exchange in Canada?

Mr. Nathan Cullen: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from the Bloc Québécois for his question.

The possibilities that come with the carbon exchange are incredible. There is a lot of interest among major polluting companies and other countries and states. For example, California, New York and Massachusetts and many other U.S. states are very interested in this project and this option for their companies.

There are advantages to Montreal having a carbon exchange now. There is an association or a relationship with the other markets, in Chicago and Europe, for increasing the amount of credits and the possible amount of money.

This money and possibility will make it easier for Canadian companies to compete effectively in reducing greenhouse gases and in introducing innovations. Canada is strongly committed to investing in education to promote technological innovation in the automobile and aviation sectors, among others. However, this is impossible if there is not enough money to do so.

Based on what we see in Europe, the Europeans obviously have an advantage that Canadian companies currently do not. This is not right and it is not good for our future and for future generations, when it comes to global competition.

[*English*]

Mr. Alan Tonks (York South—Weston, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to follow the line of questioning that our colleague from the Bloc initiated. My comments for the member are similar to those for the member for Ottawa South. The member has a tremendous amount of knowledge in this area. His views are extremely relevant and credible. My question is similar to the one that I posed to the member for Ottawa South.

It could appear that this motion, in positioning the Montreal exchange, might be somewhat divisive in the inference that other exchanges draw and that Canadians draw. The member for Ottawa South indicated the wide spectrum of activity, from resourced based industries to our manufacturing industry, to technology and innovation. I think the House and Canadians would be interested to hear the member's view with respect to that ultimate potential, such that no wrong inferences would be drawn from our supporting this motion. This is very much a national strategy that will add value to every part of the Canadian economy. The emissions credit regime and exchange would in fact underpin that.

• (1205)

Mr. Nathan Cullen: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question and his work on the environment.

There is a specific carbon exchange named within the motion, the Montréal Exchange. Many in opposition to this will fixate on that and ask why the government would pick one exchange over another. There are two places of confidence for us in supporting the motion.

I have raised some concerns with parts of the translation of the motion between the French and English versions, but this part is quite certain. The reason we are going to fix absolute targets for Canada with respect to greenhouse gases, as it reads in the motion, is “a prerequisite for the establishment...of a carbon exchange market in Montréal”. It is almost self-evident that the carbon exchange market in Montreal is impossible if there is no absolute cap on greenhouse gas emissions, nor is the market possible in Toronto, Winnipeg, or anywhere.

The motion cites what has been seen widely as the leading contender to house this market because of those relationships with Chicago, which is a predominant market in the U.S. and the European markets. The Montréal Exchange has done a great deal of work in fostering those relationships which are critical. We simply cannot have a solely Canadian based market system. It will not work. We need to have access to those larger markets.

The motion directs the most important piece, which is to have absolute targets. This is the point which I think the government is still trying to figure out too because it has refused absolute caps. It is called a cap and trade system for a reason. If there is no cap, there is no trade. That is fundamental. If there is not an absolute cap, there is not an absolute trade.

The business community came forward and the Chamber of Commerce on down said that with an intensity based target it is very difficult to ascertain how to trade because it is a moving target. What is the value? We do not know the value because that intensity target does not allow the prediction of what a company's emissions will be the following year. It is intensity based. It is a percentage of production, whereas an absolute says there is a limit and what it is. Nor could there be any kind of market exchange, a stock market or anything else, which allowed a floating fixture for a company to say how much it is actually worth based upon some intensity figures that it would release a year later. It does not work. The two go hand in hand.

The oil and gas sector in Alberta pointed that out. The Montréal Exchange people, the Chamber of Commerce and the business community pointed out that in order to have the certainty required

Business of Supply

for the investment needed to make the changes to our economy, there had to be certainty in the price. If there is no certainty in the price, companies will not trade on it. The market will not work. It will not function. Now the government seems to be encouraging a market. That is a move and we encourage that, but it has to understand the principles that are set behind it.

Know this. In the Kyoto negotiations originally, it was the United States and Canada that lobbied very hard for this mechanism. In particular, the United States was the most reluctant country entering into the Kyoto regime. The U.S. said, “If you give us this market, you free up the capital and we are now interested”. That is what caused the U.S. to sign on. The market is absolutely critical. It is fundamental to free up the capital necessary for the most advanced companies to make those investments and create the wealth that for so long we have been looking for in this country.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): There is less than a minute for both the question and the answer.

The hon. member for Parkdale—High Park.

Ms. Peggy Nash (Parkdale—High Park, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley gave an eloquent statement. He obviously has extensive knowledge on this issue.

I would like to pick up on a comment he made about the Kyoto agreement being an economic agreement. We have heard a lot of debate about jobs versus the environment. I wonder if he could comment briefly on how he sees job creation taking place under this agreement.

• (1210)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): The hon. member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley should know that the clock has run out, so the answer will be very short.

Mr. Nathan Cullen: Mr. Speaker, I will give a statistic according to the Library of Parliament in order to answer my colleague's question.

We asked the library to look at the industry of photovoltaic cells. These are the solar panels that produce electricity in Canada: 700 jobs in Canada, 50,000 jobs in Germany and over 200,000 in China. It seems like a lost opportunity—

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): Resuming debate. the Hon. member for Beauharnois—Salaberry.

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille (Beauharnois—Salaberry, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise in this House to speak on the motion introduced by the Bloc Québécois on this Bloc opposition day. This is a clear and straightforward motion calling on the government “to set fixed greenhouse gas reduction targets as soon as possible so as to meet the objectives of the Kyoto protocol, a prerequisite for the establishment, as expeditiously as possible, of a carbon exchange in Montreal”.

Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my speaking time with the hon. member for Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel.

Business of Supply

The debate we are having in the House of Commons today is a very important one, a debate on one of the greatest challenges we have ever had to face: climate change. In recent months, numerous credible scientific studies have improved knowledge of the magnitude of the environmental issues and challenges we are currently facing, and explained to some extent what most people have been realizing for themselves: we have a role and responsibility where the current climate disruptions are concerned.

I will not discuss the research commissioned by the Conservative government, which serves as the basis for the campaign of fear it has been engaged in for the past week. Acting like a lobby for the oil industry, this government has always denied the existence of climate change. One can hardly lend any credibility to such a catastrophic, apocalyptic scenario.

Instead, I will remind the members of this House of recent reports by a former World Bank chief economist Nicholas Stern and the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

The first report recommends that each country invest 1% of its GDP in fighting climate change to prevent future economic losses up to 20 times higher than the cost of reversing the trend now. There is increasing certainty about climate change, and particularly its effects: increased tropical storms, heatwaves, smog episodes, hurricanes, forest fires and droughts, not to mention glaciers melting, sea levels rising and reduced availability of drinking water.

While we do not want to be alarmist, we must be clear and honest. According to the second report, the UN report, at least 30% of the species in the world are in danger of extinction if temperatures rise two degrees above averages in recent years. As well, 250 million people could be without water by 2020. In addition, an increase in extreme weather, such as tsunamis and storms, may occur, along with other disturbing events.

During this time, as if to justify its failure to act, the Conservative government has continued to blame the Liberals' poor performance in combating climate change during the time they were in power.

Day after day, since they were elected, the Conservatives have promised us action. After 14 months in power, we see that Quebeckers and Canadians have lost 14 months in the fight against climate change. That is precious time, and in this important battle no responsible government can stand by while time is lost.

And yet after slashing climate change programs at the beginning of its term, the government then recycled the Liberal programs, under public and political pressure. Once again, precious time has been lost.

The Conservative government underestimates Quebeckers and Canadians when it comes to the importance they place on the environment and climate change. It still does not seem to be hearing them today, or even to understand what they are saying.

Issues relating to climate change and greenhouse gas emissions are very important to Quebeckers. In fact, 76% of Quebeckers believe that the government must reach the objectives in the Kyoto protocol. Quebeckers are actually the lowest producers of greenhouse gas emissions in North America, and we are one of the only developed societies, with Norway, where oil does not account for a

majority of our energy consumption. This is explained, in part, by the choice we made to develop the hydroelectric system.

We in the Bloc Québécois have echoed the concerns of the Quebec public regarding these environmental issues, on the federal scene, at least since the 2000 election campaign in which we made it one of the central topics. In 2003, the Bloc Québécois made a major contribution to the ratification of the Kyoto protocol and since then has made implementation of the protocol a priority.

• (1215)

Recently, we helped to collect over 120,000 signatures on a petition calling for compliance with the commitments made in the Kyoto protocol.

Quebeckers demand an exemplary contribution to environmental protection both from themselves and from their elected representatives. This fact is one of the major reasons why the Conservative government, which is trying to seduce Quebeckers by every imaginable means, has for some time been trying to portray itself as a green government.

Quebeckers are not fooled, and they are well aware that the Conservative government has never had any genuine interest in environmental causes. Its heart and soul have long been promised to the oil industry in western Canada. That is no secret to anyone. That is why it does not believe in the Kyoto protocol.

Here are some examples to illustrate that fact. First, the House of Commons has twice given official recognition to the importance of meeting the Kyoto targets, and rather than honouring the wishes of a majority of the members of this House, the Conservative government commissioned a study to justify its failure to act, because the Kyoto protocol would cause significant damage to companies in the west, and especially oil companies.

Then there was the Conservative government's refusal to put an immediate and complete end to the accelerated capital cost allowance (CCA) deduction available to oil companies exploiting the oil sands, in spite of the billions of dollars in profits they are pocketing.

In addition, the government has long refused to meet its own time frames and set targets for greenhouse gas reduction. It is proposing to set intensity targets rather than fixed targets. Now we learn that it is considering changing the reference date for these reductions, making 2006 the reference year instead of 1990.

Furthermore, we do not know the future of Bill C-30, which required so many hours of work over many weeks by parliamentarians on the Standing Committee on the Environment and which was significantly improved by the opposition parties. We have a good bill at the moment, which meets the expectations of Quebeckers and Canadians. What is the Conservative government going to do? It may well be in no hurry to bring it back to the House for passage.

The Conservative government is once again demonstrating that Canada's interests are at the other end of the spectrum from Quebec's. While oil makes Canada rich, it makes Quebec poor.

Business of Supply

The oil and gas industry substantially bolsters the Canadian economy, be it oil in Alberta, Newfoundland and Saskatchewan or natural gas in Nova Scotia. The inflated dollar fluctuating with the cost of a barrel of oil and heavily impacting the manufacturing sector affects Quebec's economy.

Quebec produces no oil. It must therefore import it. In 2006, Quebec purchased \$13 billion worth, while facing a trade deficit of \$7 billion. This dependence on oil has plunged Quebec into a full blown trade deficit. In truth no one can deny anymore the problem with climate change or that specific and effective action must be taken immediately.

This is why the Bloc Québécois is repeatedly calling for the implementation of the Kyoto protocol to reduce Canadian gas emissions by 6% under the 1990 level, with absolute targets.

This is why the Bloc Québécois is demanding a mechanism based on a territorial approach, that is, an approach that will give Quebec the fiscal instruments to enable it to implement the most effective measures possible to reduce greenhouse gases within its borders. This is the most effective approach, the only truly fair one reflecting the environmental efforts and choices made by Quebecers and by the province's industrial sector in recent years, especially in the area of hydroelectricity.

• (1220)

And this is why the Bloc Québécois is insisting that the plan include the establishment of a carbon exchange, to compensate the provinces, companies and organizations that lead the way in the reduction of greenhouse gases. Such an exchange is needed urgently in order to impose reduction targets on the major polluters. That is the producer pays policy. A business wishing to modernize could therefore finance the modernization to some extent by selling credits to other companies. The oil industry would be one example.

Ms. Louise Thibault (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, my question is very short and very simple. I thank my colleague for Beauharnois—Salaberry for her remarks.

What does she think of the statement made earlier by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment of the Conservative government, that the only reason the Conservatives support this motion is that it does not refer exclusively to the creation of a carbon exchange in Montreal?

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question. I believe that in the French version, the motion reads as I said in my introduction, which is that we call for absolute targets to implement a carbon exchange.

My colleague's question gives me an opportunity to explain briefly what we mean by "intensity targets". We sometimes have the impression that the Conservative government, and especially government members from Quebec, do not understand the difference between intensity targets and absolute targets.

We could, perhaps, take a very concrete example that would help people create a mental image and understand the real definition of an intensity target and the impact that could have for Quebec.

For example, let us look at the petroleum industry. Let us suppose that they are required to make a 20% reduction for every barrel they produce. The companies will comply with their targets. However, if they increase their production by a significant number of barrels, at the end of the day, the intensity targets will have been achieved but the amount of greenhouse gas will have increased because growth and production have increased. That is an important distinction. Having established intensity targets does not mean that greenhouse gases will be reduced. On the contrary, greenhouse gases will increase if production increases.

The Bloc Québécois supports the setting of absolute targets. That will enable us to truly reduce greenhouse gases and establish a carbon exchange market. Moreover, in addition to reducing greenhouse gases, with a carbon exchange, we will be creating economic wealth. Our companies are calling for that.

The call for a carbon exchange is not a whim on the part of the Bloc. The economic community demands it. We are into an era of emissions credit trading, and we have the means at hand to create wealth for our own Canadian companies. Since all the major industries in Quebec and Canada agree on that, we wonder why the Conservative government insists on its intensity targets and rejects the idea of establishing a carbon exchange.

There is clear evidence everywhere in Canada that we have reached a crossroads and we must now choose this direction so that Canada can achieve its objectives in terms of greenhouse gas reduction, as set out in the Kyoto protocol.

• (1225)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): The hon. member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie will be mindful of the fact that there is less than a minute left for both the question and the answer.

Mr. Bernard Bigras (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, does the hon. member agree that, when it comes to determining whether or not an energy sector in Canada produces greenhouse gas emissions, we should always look at the source of these emissions?

Quebec generates 95% of its power from hydroelectricity. Is it important to take into consideration the provinces' energy policy when setting targets?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): The hon. member for Beauharnois—Salaberry must know that I have been very generous to her so far. This time, I will have to interrupt her after 30 seconds.

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille: Mr. Speaker, I thank you for your great generosity. The hon. member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie is right, and what he just mentioned illustrates the importance of promoting a territorial approach, rather than a sectorial one.

Mr. Mario Laframboise (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, first, I want to thank the hon. member for Beauharnois—Salaberry for her excellent presentation. I also thank her for splitting her time with me.

Business of Supply

I want to read the Bloc Québécois motion, which was so well presented by the hon. member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, who is our environment critic and who, incidentally, does an excellent job. He is now recognized in Quebec, and even across Canada, as an expert in this field. I will read the French version of the motion because, before the end of my presentation, I will amend the English version, which is slightly different. The French version of the motion reads as follows:

Que la Chambre invite le gouvernement à établir au plus tôt des cibles absolues de réduction des gaz à effet de serre permettant d'atteindre les objectifs du Protocole de Kyoto, une condition préalable à l'établissement, dans les meilleurs délais, d'une bourse du carbone à Montréal.

Before getting to the essence of this motion, I want to talk about the differences, in terms of greenhouse gas emissions, between the Canadian provinces, by taking as a starting point the date set under the Kyoto protocol, that is the year 1990. I am referring to the increase in greenhouse gas emissions, by province, between 1990 and 2004.

Greenhouse gases have increased by 10% in Prince Edward Island, by 6.1% in Quebec, by 16.5% in Nova Scotia, by 11.4% in Manitoba, by 15% in Ontario, by 4.3% in Newfoundland and Labrador, by 29.9% in British Columbia, by 46.9% in New Brunswick, by 39.4% in Alberta, and by 61.7% in Saskatchewan.

For Canada as a whole, that is a 26.5% increase in greenhouse gases, using 1990 as the baseline. Without Quebec, it would be 30%.

Clearly Quebec has made its energy choices, namely hydroelectricity. Once again I am pleased to say in this House, to all my colleagues from the other parties and the other provinces, that Quebec, without any federal contributions, has paid for its own hydroelectric resources out of the taxes and the hydro bills of the taxpayers of Quebec.

Quebec decided to go for hydroelectricity, which today makes it the province where greenhouse gas emissions have increased the least since 1990. I think that this is an example that the rest of Canada should follow. It is not for nothing that Quebec and the Bloc Québécois are today defending Quebeckers, who are prepared to meet the targets of the Kyoto protocol and are asking the rest of Canada to follow Quebec's example and meet those targets.

This is a choice that Quebec has made. When we do an inventory of greenhouse gases in Quebec, the picture shows us that the transportation sector is the largest source of emissions, representing 38.5% of Quebec's total emissions. Of our 6.1% increase, 38.5% is from the transportation sector. In this sector, road transportation accounts for 85.3% of greenhouse gases.

So we have to get to the heart of the problem, and one of the most significant parts of this problem is road transportation, passenger motor vehicles and oil pollution. This is the battle to be waged. We have to be able to reach our objectives.

This is why the Bloc Québécois tabled this motion in the House today. This motion is based, as I mentioned earlier, on absolute targets so as to allow the creation of a carbon exchange in Montreal.

I am going to talk about the advantages of a carbon exchange. This will create a market in tradable permits. The carbon exchange is not new and it already exists. There are carbon exchanges in Chicago

and in Europe. The principle is operational. I am going to summarize this and take the trouble to read my notes because it is important for things to be understood clearly.

● (1230)

A carbon exchange is a tool that a company, government or organization that reduced its greenhouse gas emissions to below its reduction targets could use to sell the tonnes of greenhouse gases that it would still have been entitled to emit. That allows companies that make an effort to sell the surplus greenhouse gases they saved.

Unsurprisingly companies in Quebec that have made that effort, as compared to their 1990 emissions, for example in the forestry and aluminum industries, are impatient to see this kind of carbon exchange in place, so that they will be able to sell credits in order to make savings and increase part of their assets.

A permit market will, for example, allow a company that exceeds its targets to sell its surpluses to another company that is finding it difficult to reduce its emissions.

We are accused of taking government money so that we can finance this whole carbon exchange objective. The opposite is true; companies, including oil companies, that want to exceed their emissions will have to buy credits or permits from companies that have made savings. The companies will be the ones paying; there is no government money. That, as my colleague explained so well, is the polluter-pay principle.

My colleague from Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie has always argued that principle in this House. I have heard him on many occasions asking the government whether it would one day accept the polluter-pay principle. Someone who wants to continue polluting will have to buy credits in order to do so. It is as simple as that.

This is how Europe has managed to meet greenhouse gas reduction targets. At the same time, this is a powerful financial incentive to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, because the company can cash in on its reductions. This system will encourage the most successful companies to be in a position to make money on emission credits. Those who cannot, and we often think of oil companies and their enormous profits, will take their surpluses, and rather than paying dividends to shareholders every three months, may be able to use part of them to stay in business.

But a carbon exchange cannot be created unless absolute greenhouse gas emission targets are set. The reduction is simple: 6% under 1990 levels. The Bloc Québécois had good reason to be very logical in drafting its motion. We are calling for absolute reductions in order to be able to establish a carbon exchange. This requires, however, that an independent body or bodies be created and given the task of certifying greenhouse gas reductions and imposing financial penalties on organizations that fail to meet them.

The principle adopted by the Bloc Québécois is obviously that a carbon exchange be established in Montreal, based on the principles of absolute reduction targets. That is why I am moving this amendment. I move the following amendment, with the consent of the member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie and supported by the member for Beauharnois—Salaberry:

That the motion be amended by substituting the word "absolute" for the word "fixed" in the English version.

That is the amendment I am moving.

• (1235)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): I must inform the hon. members that an amendment to an opposition motion may be moved only with the consent of the sponsor of the motion. Consequently, I ask the hon. member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie whether he agrees that this amendment be moved.

Mr. Bernard Bigras (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I agree.

I want to thank my colleague from Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel for his speech today in this debate on the opposition motion introduced by the Bloc Québécois. Right at the start, he explained well to us how Quebec's positioning on energy was different from the rest of Canada when Quebec chose to develop hydroelectricity in the 1960s and 1970s.

Following the answer provided by my colleague from Beauharnois—Salaberry, I ask my colleague from Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel whether he thinks that the best way to arrive, in Canada, at a fair system that maximizes the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions is to take the territorial approach.

In fact, I would like to say that the CIBC report that I talked about a few minutes ago indicates that the production of electricity is often the most important factor in determining the potential exposure of a province to the costs associated with greenhouse gas emissions.

Since there is no common energy policy across Canada, would it not be normal to take these differences into account in the fight against climate change and in the overall efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, so as to finally apply, as my colleague was saying, the polluter-pay instead of the polluter-paid principle?

Mr. Mario Laframboise: Mr. Speaker, I will be glad to answer the question from my colleague from Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie. It is all the more important because the Conservatives are very difficult to understand.

Yesterday in Montreal the Minister of the Environment said that reaching the Kyoto targets would result in a 65% increase in the cost of hydro bills in Quebec. That shows that the minister does not know much about Quebec. There is an energy regulatory authority in Quebec and no one else can determine price increases. Price increases are directly related to the revenues the Quebec government wishes to obtain. Right now, there is a Liberal government which wants to constantly increase the revenue it gets from hydroelectricity, and so the price increases.

Prices used to be raised every April 1; now there are three increases every year. That is completely independent of the fight to cut greenhouse gases. Quebec uses only 50% of its hydroelectricity potential, which means that it could still double its production and the energy produced would be entirely clean.

The Conservative Party has a problem. It does not know Quebec and it would benefit from listening to the Bloc Québécois. Maybe it is ready to do that today. Once again, the Bloc Québécois shows the way. However, it must be said that if Quebec were independent, it would be the second country in the world to have more electricity than oil. Therefore, Quebec is an example for the whole world.

Business of Supply

The Conservative Party is waging a campaign of fear about an industry that belongs to Quebecers and to which the federal government has never given one single penny in the past and will not do so in the future either. We develop our own hydroelectricity. We are an example to follow. I hope that the Conservative Party will follow the example set by the Bloc Québécois and Quebec and will vote for the motion today.

• (1240)

[*English*]

Mr. Brian Fitzpatrick (Prince Albert, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Churchill water system in Saskatchewan is pristine. The water is pure. There are no dams on that river system. A lot of environmental people would be very concerned if anybody ever suggested that we build a hydro dam on this system.

Is the Bloc member advocating that we start building hydro dams on every river and system in the shield area of Canada? In doing so, we would cause a lot of ecological damage.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): The hon. member for Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel has 30 seconds to answer.

Mr. Mario Laframboise: Mr. Speaker, I have nothing to propose to the people of Saskatchewan. However, since they produce 69% more greenhouse gases now than in 1990, they are not in a position to give lessons to anybody, especially not to Quebecers.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): The hon. member for Lévis—Bellechasse, for debate.

Mr. Steven Blaney: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Is it time for my speech?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): The hon. member for Lévis—Bellechasse, has nine minutes and 50 seconds.

Mr. Steven Blaney (Lévis—Bellechasse, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I find it pathetic to see that the Bloc members are giving themselves a lot of credit for environment issues in this House. There is not one single person here who does not want to take real action to improve the environmental situation of Canada.

I remind my colleagues from the Bloc that the prime minister whose record is most praised by environmentalists was the Right Hon. Brian Mulroney, who was a Conservative Prime Minister. I would also remind the members from the Bloc who are in opposition

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Steven Blaney: I would like them to let me speak because I let them speak when they are on their feet. I would like to remind them that it is our government that gave \$300 million to allow Quebec to implement its sustainable development plan. It is also our government that took measures that benefit public transit users. It is also our government that, yesterday, announced a \$200 million investment to develop biofuels.

Business of Supply

Businesses from my riding of Lévis—Bellechasse which are doing three feasibility studies were here yesterday. In both biofuel and biodiesel, big agricultural cooperatives are taking part in the studies and it is our government that is taking action. The record of the present Conservative government is entirely comparable to that of previous governments. It is important to mention that.

I am also pleased to rise today and speak to what we will do henceforth to achieve something that the previous government never did, that is to say, targets for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. To do this, I will be sharing my time with my colleague from Alberta, the hon. member for Fort McMurray—Athabasca, who is very environmentally aware and is dealing with stupendous challenges of growth and the environment that sometimes boggle the imagination.

We have proposed a clean air and climate change program. In many cities, even Quebec City, a grey cloud can sometimes be seen hanging over the city in the summer. We did not see this 10 or 15 years ago. Now we do, and we want action. We want action to ensure there is clean air in our cities and to avoid health problems.

Let me be perfectly clear. Our government realizes that climate change is one of the most serious threats to health and world economy. Our government is taking action, therefore, while the Bloc just isolates itself. We know now that the targets that were set cannot possibly be achieved in the prescribed time. Greenhouse gas emissions increased by 35% while the Bloc members sat there representing Quebeckers in the House. Now we have Conservative members here from Quebec who are taking action on behalf of the environment.

The voluntary measures and *laissez-faire* policy advocated by the previous government not only proved ineffective but left Canada in a position that made it impossible for us to achieve the targets in the Kyoto protocol in the prescribed time. That is very clear. We are doing away, therefore, with voluntary measures. For far too long, our efforts to improve the environment were thwarted by unrealistic objectives like those the opposition parties sometimes propose and by the timidity of a government that showered us with fine words but did not actually do anything out in the field where it counts and did not dare to assume its responsibilities.

We are the ones, therefore, who are taking action. We have proposed a regulatory framework that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions and pollutants in all sectors of the economy. We are introducing and will continue to introduce other measures as well that fight climate change and air pollution.

I would like to add that the reductions we are instituting in greenhouse gases and pollutants are mandatory under the regulations. The leading organization in the Quebec environmental movement, RÉSEAU, says that legislation is the driving force behind the environment industry and it provides the tools to stimulate the development of environmental technologies in Canada.

We are setting strict but achievable targets. Sustainable development, I would remind my hon. colleagues in the Bloc, is a balance between the economy and the environment in a context in which social measures are also taken into account.

● (1245)

It is the spirit of the Kyoto protocol we want to honour, obviously. Furthermore, our program sets out results obligations. We insist on results—something we have not seen in the past 13 years—in order to speed up reduction target achievement, as required.

[*English*]

I will turn my attention to what I consider some key aspects of the government's approach, aspects which set it apart from the actions, or more accurately, lack of action, by the previous government.

Our goals are the goals of Canadians and Quebeckers: to protect the health, environment and prosperity of Canadians now and in the future, our children's future.

This government respects the principles of the Kyoto protocol and is committed to making real progress toward achieving those objectives. We are setting targets that contribute to significant reductions, not only of greenhouse gases but also of the air pollutants, which originate from many of the same sources, to provide immediate and long term benefits for Canadians.

[*Translation*]

Over 3 million Canadians have asthma, bronchitis or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, and air pollution is a major factor. Air pollution is also a factor in cardio-vascular diseases, which are the cause of 40% of all deaths in Canada and the source of \$25 billion in costs annually. The prevalence of these diseases will increase as Canadians grow older. So we must work to reduce the vulnerability of the elderly to the dangers of these pollutants. Poor air quality has other harmful effects—lung cancer, respiratory ailments, reduced activity and absenteeism from work or school.

The intent of the government is to minimize, indeed eradicate, the health risks posed by environmental pollutants in the air. Clear air is essential to the life and health of all Canadians. We do not consider the approach of the previous government—which obviously failed and which have put us in our present situation—was effective or appropriate. Agreeing to the Kyoto targets without a plan is tantamount to burying one's head in the sand. It will take more than a magic wand to achieve the targets.

Even attempting to achieve them would mean significant risk to our society and our economy. Just last week, a professor from Laval university said that, while we have to reduce greenhouse gases, the method proposed by the opposition will result not in sustainable development, but rather in the destruction of the country's economy. This must be recognized. A balance such as the clean air agenda has to be found. Our government is proposing effective legislation on climate change.

Business of Supply

We can say to Canadians and Quebeckers that the Conservatives in Ottawa are getting things moving, working for the environment and inviting the opposition's support in its actions to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions, here in Canada and around the world.

• (1250)

Mr. Bernard Bigras (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the speech made today by the member opposite is a little disappointing. At first, he blamed the Bloc Québécois for the inaction of the federal government. The member was not here these past 13 years when his political party not only had no plan to propose, but was also torpedoing the Kyoto protocol. The Conservative Party was denying the fact that climate changes existed. It believed that this was only a natural phenomenon that was unrelated to human activity.

Consequently, we have nothing to learn from the Conservative Party, which, for 13 years, denied that climate changes existed and, today, has no real plan to propose to us.

I would thus ask the member how long he has been believing in climate changes. How long has it been?

Mr. Steven Blaney: Mr. Speaker, I would simply like to remind the House, and this is a fact, that, in the past 13 years, Quebec's representatives here in Ottawa were mostly from the Bloc Québécois, and it is during these years that no effective follow-up was done and that we saw greenhouse gas emissions increased by 35%. We argue that we are clearly responding to the will of Canadians. We have a bill. My colleague who will speak in a few minutes sat at the committee that wants the legislation on climate changes and air quality. Unfortunately, that legislation was torpedoed a little. I will give the example—

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

Mr. Steven Blaney: Mr. Speaker, I would like to be able to speak without being interrupted. I would ask my colleagues opposite to let me speak.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): Please, the members sitting on my left will remember that yesterday, I asked the members sitting on my right to pay more attention when the member for Montmorency—Charlevoix—Haute-Côte-Nord was speaking. Whatever applies to the right also applies to the left.

Right now, the member for Lévis—Bellechasse has the floor, and I would like to hear what he says. Therefore, I need some silence on the left. Thank you.

Mr. Steven Blaney: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Obviously, we are here to make progress on the environmental issue, and that is what we are trying to do on this side of the House.

[*English*]

Mr. Brian Jean (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak today to this important bill. This government is taking real action to address the issues of air quality and climate change, which are of concern to Canadians in every region of our vast country.

Harmful emissions continue to affect our environment, our health, as well as our quality of life. It affects us every day in everything we do.

As we on this side of the House have said before, we believe that climate change is one of the greatest threats facing the world today and we take it very seriously.

The Prime Minister and the Minister of the Environment have been very clear that this government intends to bring in a short term regulatory framework very shortly. This is the first government in history to actually take this step for Canadians and the quality of life for Canadians.

Canada's new government wants industry to do a U-turn but instead of talking about it, we are taking action. Instead of 13 years of increased emissions under the Liberals, we want to turn the corner and reduce emissions and get real results. Under the watch of the previous Liberal government we are now 35% above the agreement it signed on Kyoto.

These tough new industrial regulations that our Conservative government will be bringing forward will give real, tangible health and environmental benefits for Canadians, on the ground benefits, as well as some positive economic effects. We will do that without stopping the economy or slowing down the economy. We will do it by keeping pace with the economy and adding to it.

Obviously we cannot put a price tag on all these benefits, such as cleaner communities and natural spaces, of healthier children, of fewer premature deaths, of more sustainable natural resources and, for the first time ever, meaningful contributions to the global effort to control greenhouse gas emissions through a strong regulatory agenda, through a government that gets results and sends a clear message to industry that we want results.

Today I am pleased to have an opportunity to discuss some of those initiatives, specifically in the area of transportation. It is very important to realize that transportation is one of the largest sources of air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions in Canada. Our efforts in this sector will play a very key role in Canada's environmental agenda.

The movement of people and the movement of goods causes significant environmental consequences. We are a trading nation. We are a nation of movers. Things such as air and water pollution are so important and they are caused by this area of transportation. These environmental impacts in turn result in real social and economic costs and affect the health and quality of life of Canadians from wherever we are, whether we are in the city or the country.

Transportation has been linked to over half of Canada's total carbon monoxide emissions and nitrogen oxide emissions. The growth of emissions in this sector is caused in large part by the growth in our population, which is obviously growing at quite a pace in some parts of the country, our economy and its growth, as well as improvements in our standard of living. We like to travel around in the summertime to our cottages or in our boats. This leads to more road and air travel.

Business of Supply

Total transportation related greenhouse gas emissions increased by 27% between 1990 and 2004. These emissions now account for 25% of Canada's total greenhouse gas emissions, the largest single source of gas emissions.

In October 2006, the Conservative Government of Canada issued its notice of intent to regulate major emitting industry sectors of the economy. In terms of regulatory action in the transportation sector, this Conservative government will be taking action with respect to motor vehicles, rail, aviation and marine. I think industry overall, in all parts of Canada, is looking forward to knowing with certainty what this government intends to do and we will tell them.

Emissions from road transportation accounts for 75% of Canada's total greenhouse gas emissions and passenger travel accounts for over half of that. Those are unbelievable statistics. Our goal is to establish a regulatory regime with targets that promote concrete environmental improvements that are also consistent with the need for industry to remain competitive in the North American context and in the world. This includes the auto and oil sectors. They must remain competitive. We must keep the jobs in Canada.

With respect to the rail sector, the Minister of Transport and the Minister of the Environment support the current voluntary agreement negotiated with the Railway Association of Canada. This agreement will ensure that the rail industry reduces its emissions of air pollutants consistent with the United States Environmental Protection Agency air pollutants standards and continues to improve the performance of its greenhouse gas emissions between 2006 and 2010. This will get results. Through the current Railway Safety Act, this government will develop and implement new regulations to take effect following the end of the voluntary agreement in 2010.

•(1255)

For the marine industry, the Government of Canada supports the development of new international standards because, obviously, we share the water with so many other countries. These were established by the International Maritime Organization for controlling air emissions from ships. The government will ensure their application domestically under the Canada Shipping Act and this will also include support for a process to designate North American coasts as areas where ships must reduce sulphur emissions.

For the aviation industry, the Government of Canada supports the development of international standards and recommended practices through the International Civil Aviation Organization for emissions from aviation sources. We believe that this is the best way to get results in the short term and in the long term.

Our approach to dealing with environmental issues does not end with regulations. We have some hands-on approaches that will bring tangible results very soon. This government is making complementary investments to encourage the development of environmental technologies and to stimulate behavioural changes through consumers, which is where I think we will see the best results.

In February, the government announced its ecotransport strategy, an excellent strategy that is aimed at reducing emissions from the transportation sector. Initiatives under the strategy include the ecomobility program aimed at working with municipalities to help

cut urban passenger transportation emissions and develop programs, services and products for urban areas.

The next initiative is the ecotechnology for vehicles program which will provide funding for testing and promoting advanced, environmentally friendly vehicle technologies and building partnerships with automotive industries; in essence, to get more fuel efficient vehicles on the road and with consumers.

The third initiative is the ecofreight program which is aimed at reducing the environmental and health effects of freight transportation through the accelerated adoption of emissions reducing technology. Technology is the goal and reducing it today for tomorrow's generation is what we will do.

The ecoenergy for personal vehicles program, which is delivered by Natural Resources Canada, will be especially interesting to some people because Natural Resources Canada will provide fuel consumption information and decision making tools to encourage consumers to purchase those more fuel efficient vehicles that are currently available in the market. We believe this will bring even more vehicles into the marketplace for consumers.

In the past year, Canada's new government has taken real tangible steps to get results for Canadians with more than \$2 billion of investments in a cleaner and more efficient transportation system. Budget 2007 builds on these investments by encouraging the purchase of more fuel efficient vehicles, the retirement, which is very important, of older and more polluting vehicles, and the domestic production of renewable fuels, which will help not only our economy but our environment and our farmers generally across the country.

In budget 2007, this government announced the ecoauto program, a new performance based rebate program offering up to \$2,000 for the purchase of a new fuel efficient or efficient alternative fuel vehicle.

These steps are excellent and this government is taking tangible steps today to get results for Canadians.

Initiatives in budget 2007 to create an infrastructure advantage also helped. On the Bill C-30 committee, we heard from a witness from Quebec of how important green spaces were, not just to people but to the environment itself and to Canada for long term strategy.

We are including the transfer of \$2 billion per year to the municipalities from 2010-11 and 2013-14 by extending the gas tax funding. We have listened to the stakeholders, to the municipalities and to the provinces and we are taking steps to ensure we provide what they want, which is a cleaner environment, more green spaces and a better quality of life for the people.

This Conservative government is meeting the challenge to foster cleaner air and to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The transport sector, the sector that we are responsible for, is a key part of our strategy and we are going from the bottom to the top to ensure we find all the places on which we can move forward for a cleaner environment.

I have provided some concrete examples of the actions that Canada's new government is taking now to protect and improve the health of Canadians and the environment by reducing the environmental impacts of transportation.

• (1300)

This government wants our air and our water to be clean and we want to take action on climate change. We want our communities, our families and our children to be healthy.

I am confident that in working with all members of the House and with all levels of government, industry and all Canadians, we will ensure that improvements are made, not only to our environment but also to the health and quality of life of all Canadians today and for future generations.

We are getting the job done.

• (1305)

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my colleague, the parliamentary secretary, passed over something that is critical and I would like to clarify the record.

When it comes to the motion before us today, which talks about the creation of a market based approach to emissions trading, particularly as demonstrated in the example of the Montreal exchange, what we heard from witnesses consistently was that in order to have a viable and verifiable exchange, which is commonly known as a cap and trade system, there needed to be a cap and that cap had to be a target that was seen as absolute to allow industry the certainty to know what the value of carbon emissions would be in the future.

In supporting the notion of a Montreal exchange, which we have been told requires an absolute cap, is the member now supporting an absolute fixed target for Canada's emission requirements?

Mr. Brian Jean: Mr. Speaker, I can assure my friend that unlike the previous government, the Liberal government that did nothing for 13 years, this government will look at all options to find the best options for Canadians to deliver results.

I know there is nothing the Liberals can do to move forward for a cleaner and better quality of life for Canadians but we can and we are doing it on this side of the House. We are looking at all possible options to get the best results for Canadians in the short term, medium term and long term.

I would encourage the member to hold his breath for a period of time because shortly we will have an announcement on exactly what concrete steps the government will take. After less than 13 months, we will be taking steps to get things done.

Mr. David McGuinty (Ottawa South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to follow up with the parliamentary secretary and talk about some of the steps that the government actually has taken and what the reaction has been to some of those steps. I would like to keep it focused for a moment on the actual responsibilities of the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities.

First, three particular announcements have been made, which I would like to bring to the attention of the parliamentary secretary and get his reaction to them. The first was the transit pass measure

Business of Supply

announced in a budget of the government. The government was forewarned by both finance officials and environment officials who told it explicitly that the cost per tonne of reduction of greenhouse gases using this transit pass gimmick would be in the range of \$2,000 per tonne of greenhouse gases reduced. The government was given hard evidence and hard advice to suggest that it should be investing in infrastructure.

Second, the Minister of the Environment, here in the national capital region, killed the light rail project for this city.

Third, and more egregiously, is the feebate. The entire Canadian Vehicle Manufacturers' Association and the industry are vehemently opposed to the government's feebate structure saying that it will create unacceptable competitive inequities. It is discriminating against—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport.

Mr. Brian Jean: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to comment on what my friend has brought forward.

First, under the previous government, of which he is a member, emissions rose 35% over the Kyoto target. Indeed, he was the chair of the national round table on the environment and the economy and was providing advice to the then prime minister. I wonder whether the prime minister did not take his advice or that in fact the advice was bad.

However, I must clarify something. Unlike the previous Liberal government, whose members interfered in municipal and provincial elections, we do not do that. We let the municipalities decide by themselves, like our minister has done with this particular municipality. We need to let the municipalities decide what they want as far as the LRT goes.

The transit passes were an excellent initiative. We look at all possible options to lower greenhouse gas emissions and to get a better quality of life and better air and water quality for Canadians, not just one or two.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Marcel Lussier (Brossard—La Prairie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the motion from the Bloc Québécois is structured around three elements, including the fixed targets that will allow us to meet the Kyoto targets. These targets will be achieved swiftly with the implementation of a carbon exchange.

Before going any further, I would like to mention that I will be sharing my time with the member for Brome—Missisquoi.

The Bloc Québécois has been constantly urging the federal government, both Liberal and Conservative, to act in order to meet the Kyoto targets. Twice recently, the House officially recognized the importance of meeting these targets. The Bloc Québécois notes that, instead of developing a truly effective plan including the establishment of a carbon exchange, the Minister of the Environment dedicates himself to rejecting Kyoto, as he has shown in his last document released on April 19.

Business of Supply

For the Bloc, there are not a thousand solutions. The polluter-pay principle must apply, fixed reduction targets must be established and Quebec as well as other provinces wishing to do so must be allowed to use a territorial approach.

It is time for the Conservative government to stop blocking the efforts of companies hoping to be part of this solution and to benefit from the progressive replacement of oil with renewable and clean sources of energy.

Given the certainties that are piling up in respect of global warming, it is obvious that investing in combating climate change is no longer optional, from both the human and the economic perspectives. The report recently produced by Nicholas Stern, formerly an economist with the World Bank, in fact recommended that all countries invest up to 1% of gross domestic product, starting now, in combating climate change, to avoid the potential economic costs, which may amount to as much as \$7.5 trillion dollars, on the global scale, a cost that will be 20 times more than the money needed now to reverse the trend.

The recent study released by the Minister of the Environment is completely silent on the far more significant consequences of doing nothing, consequences that will cost billions of dollars, certainly, but that will also involve serious losses in terms of biodiversity, millions of refugees and much more frequent extreme weather events.

Moreover, the economic impact predicted by the study released by the Minister of the Environment is based on a tax of \$195 per tonne of greenhouse gases. That is a completely exaggerated figure, if we compare it to the \$20 that credits now cost through the clean development mechanisms, and in particular to what it costs to institute greenhouse gas reduction measures.

A far more credible UN study estimates, rather, that a tax of from \$25 to \$50 per tonne is effective. Obviously, the Minister of the Environment has opted for the worst-case scenario, rather than telling the public the whole truth.

In 2004, Canada emitted 26% more greenhouse gases than the limit set for it in 1990. This means that in order to reach the target of 6% less than in 1990, Canada will have to reduce its annual emissions by nearly 260 megatonnes each year. Quebec has made different choices. Between 1990 and 2004, its greenhouse gases rose by barely 6%, four times less than the Canadian average. As well, Quebec has already been showing leadership, with a very concrete plan to address climate change that incorporates all of the Kyoto objectives.

It is the Conservative government, whose ministers directly concerned do not believe in the Kyoto protocol, that is trying today to give itself a green veneer, when it is still not able to meet its own deadlines for deciding what targets will have to be met.

●(1310)

This is a government that is even considering changing the reference dates for reduction efforts, using 2006 as the reference year rather than 1990. The federal government is doing nothing to recognize the efforts put into this by Quebec companies over the last 16 years.

In recent years, Quebec's manufacturing industry has continued to make sacrifices, while the polluters, primarily the oil companies in the west, have continued to increase their production and emission of greenhouse gases. The government, not satisfied with continuing its already impressive contributions to the oil companies, is preparing to completely negate all of the efforts that Quebec has undertaken, in order to reward those polluters yet again. The unfairness embodied in that attitude is disturbing, and Quebec finds it unconscionable. It is essential that the federal government use the 1990 reference year and give more recognition to the work done in Quebec.

When the government pits economic development against environmental protection, there is one thing it is forgetting: in a context where pollution would be costly and non-pollution profitable, Quebec enjoys a relatively huge comparative advantage, one which ought to ensure its prosperity. With the situation in Quebec being different, it is only normal for Quebec to be able to implement a different plan adapted to its situation. If the federal government is serious about reducing greenhouse gas emissions, if it is really serious about this challenge and wants to find a solution, the Bloc Québécois calls upon it to take some simple yet effective measures in order to meet Kyoto protocol targets.

The Bloc Québécois therefore proposes integration of a trading permit market, called a carbon exchange, with a territorial approach. A carbon exchange is a tool which enables a company, government or agency which has brought its greenhouse gas emissions below the objectives set by the absolute targets to sell the tons of greenhouse gas emissions it would still be entitled to emit. For example, a carbon exchange would enable a company that has exceeded its targets to sell its surplus to another experiencing difficulty reducing its emissions.

This becomes a powerful financial incentive to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, because the company can reap a financial benefit from its reductions. Creating a carbon exchange is, however, possible only if absolute greenhouse gas emission targets are predetermined. What is more, the reduction is simple: 6% less than 1990 levels. An independent body, or bodies, will have to be created, however, to certify greenhouse gas reductions and impose financial penalties on those who do not produce the permits relating to their emissions.

To state the situation clearly, to have a carbon exchange in place on other than a voluntary basis, the following are necessary: set greenhouse gas emission reduction targets, a specific effective date for the targets, and a certification mechanism for each ton of greenhouse gas emitted.

●(1315)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): Did the member intend to split his time?

Some hon. members: Yes.

Mr. Christian Ouellet (Brome—Missisquoi, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we were in Rio to represent Canada in 1992 when Mr. Mulroney signed on to the concept of the Kyoto protocol.

Climate change remains a political problem today and a solution will require political will, but Brian Mulroney is not there anymore.

Business of Supply

We need to take action, but what kind of action? A good number of the proposed solutions are inadequate or ill-conceived. We are now in the unfortunate situation where the Conservatives are giving us an inaccurate economic message at odds with what the public wants.

Because of their poor policy analysis of the role of economy, environment and social responsibility, the famous mandatory and egalitarian treaty of sustainable development, they cancelled all existing policies and programs. Because of that and their immature behaviour, they lost a year and a half. They do not even fully understand now the need for absolute targets, fixed amounts, for the reduction of greenhouse gases for a particular region or industry. Without absolute targets, it will be impossible to achieve any fixed target.

Bush managed to convince the public that he could successfully reduce greenhouse gases with relative targets. The Conservatives, however, will not be able to fool Canadians like this and especially not Quebecers, because the game of deception played by Bush and, unfortunately, by his spiritual son, our Prime Minister, will not pull the same rabbit out of the hat a second time.

Let us look at what the Americans did. When Bush became President, the Kyoto denigration and procrastination strategists realized that, given that they were opposed to real climate change action, they had better find a way of looking as though they were doing something. The result was to set relative targets while trumpeting the new technologies. It was all meant to be better, more effective and less restrictive than joining the other countries and moving ahead with Kyoto. That was the sham.

So the American “conservatives” decided to campaign with the emphasis on individual voluntary action and environmental progress, much like our Minister of the Environment, who makes his point loudly, as do all the powerless people of this world.

In February 2002, after a year of non-stop criticism by the Democrats and the informed members of the public, Bush responded by setting a relative target for his nation, that is, to reduce the intensity of greenhouse gas emissions by 18% by 2012, in other words, in 10 years. The word “intensity” comes back often in the United States because it is based on a complex concept, unlike the Kyoto protocol, and this fools people. But without the words “absolute and mandatory targets,” the Bush administration deceived the public, who actually got the impression that Bush wanted to reduce emissions, not let them increase.

The subterfuge was linked to the absence of the word “absolute,” by sector and by region. The subterfuge was the quantity of emissions per unit of economic activity measured on the basis of the gross national product.

As our Prime Minister is getting ready to do, Bush used two different lines to confuse the public, and the result of this was that, instead of falling by 18%, as promised, emissions in the United States will have increased by 14% over a 10-year period, given that the projected total increase was 32% for this period.

● (1320)

This shows how an illusion can be created. When someone cries wolf as loudly as our Minister of the Environment, it is because he is feeling weak and powerless among his pack of wolves.

The Kyoto protocol, with its absolute objectives, and its moderate, realistic and thus achievable goals, is what Canada and Quebec have committed to. It is not by rejecting Kyoto as a solution botched by the Liberals that the government will fulfil the obligations expected of it by the public. The Bush model revisited by the Conservatives and supported by the Canadian oil companies with foreign capital so as to supply the United States—how very convenient—allows the government to take the short view. I would like to debate something like that in an election campaign in Quebec.

Twenty-five thousand people marched in the streets to show how much support there is for Kyoto.

I would like to conclude with a word on the carbon exchange. Projections of American utilities are that the cost of a tonne of carbon should not exceed US \$55 in 2020. This is the price that is actually accepted. There is a consensus on this in the American business community in January 2007. This cost represents 1.5¢ a kilowatt-hour for a coal-fired power plant, according to Joseph Room, whom I met personally in Atlanta a few years ago.

This is a far cry from the outlandish \$195 a tonne figures that came out. These are figures the Conservatives are using to scare people. Unless I am mistaken, the increase will simply be one that promotes energy efficiency.

As a matter of fact, this new government, with its ideology and lack of experience, wants to use health and pollution as a diversion to try to hide the most important problem that will affect all of us, and that is climate change. In its diversion tactics, how is it going to deal with the mercury emissions of coal-fired power plants, 90% of the effects of which affect our children? Conservatives may not have children, but I have a seven and a half month old daughter, and I wonder what kind of air there will be for her to breathe and on what kind of planet she will live.

A carbon exchange, or the setting of a market price for a tonne of carbon in the exchange, is after all a conservative and capitalist concept. The new government should buy into this old concept that everyone should pay the price they want to. This would promote energy efficiency, cogeneration, renewable energies, the sequestration of enormous amounts of CO₂ released by the production of oil from tar sands, and the sequestration of CO₂ in coal-fired power plants.

Conservatives try to make believe they do not understand what the real solution is. I have this to say to them. Their grandchildren, for those of them who will have some, will tell them one day, “Hey, grandpa, it was really stupid of you to consider just the financial side of things”.

● (1325)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): Before going on to questions and comments, I wish to thank the hon. member for Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert for filling in for me for a few moments.

Questions and comments. The hon. member for Alfred-Pellan.

Business of Supply

Mr. Robert Carrier (Alfred-Pellan, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I wish to congratulate my colleague from Brome—Missisquoi on his excellent speech.

Even though the Quebec nation will be able to reach its Kyoto targets with a small contribution from the federal government, as a Quebecker, I am deeply concerned about Quebec's ability to reach all its Kyoto targets in spite of all the efforts Quebec has made over the years.

Since the neighbouring country, Canada, will not be able to respect the principles of greenhouse gas reduction, I am concerned about the effect that could have on Quebec, because it is surrounded by Canada, the other provinces, and on Quebec's ability to reach its targets.

Mr. Christian Ouellet: Mr. Speaker, excuse me but, being too engrossed in my text, I missed a very rare opportunity to address Madam Speaker.

My colleague's question is excellent since, in fact, we have only one planet. CO₂ emissions in another part of Canada will also affect Quebec, which, in turn, affects Europe. This is the reason why we adopted an international accord called the Kyoto protocol, to discuss our needs and work together on a common and collective project.

Unfortunately, certain individualistic, selfish countries have not adhered to it. But even countries like China and India have signed on and will, starting in 2012, have targets of their own to reach. The United States and Australia are the only two countries that have not ratified the protocol and, sadly, Canada now wants to withdraw its ratification. This really is terrible, because emissions in one country can affect other countries.

• (1330)

Ms. Louise Thibault (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his remarks. My question will be very simple.

Earlier this morning, the parliamentary secretary said that the Conservative government would support this Bloc Québécois motion because it does not refer to the establishment of a carbon exchange in Montreal exclusively.

I would like to know if this is a cause for concern for my colleague. Also, does he have any comments to make on the fact that it seems it will take forever for the clean air bill to be brought back to the House?

Mr. Christian Ouellet: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her excellent question.

We will indeed have to find a place to establish this exchange. Obviously it should be in Montreal. It is the obvious choice because agreements have already been made in that regard and it would be unfortunate not to have it in Montreal. However, all in all, it is still more important to have a carbon exchange in Canada, wherever it is, than to have it in Montreal immediately. I would not mind if it were in Salaberry-de-Valleyfield or in Sherbrooke, but it would be a good thing to have a carbon exchange.

As for the bill, this morning, a government colleague told us that the government would probably deal with this issue through regulations. If this is the case, it will sidestep the law.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): The member for Don Valley West has time to ask a brief question, so I will ask him to pay attention to my signal.

Hon. John Godfrey (Don Valley West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the member if the federal government is the one that will decide where the carbon exchange will be established or if the market will simply make that choice itself among the competitive exchanges that may exist anywhere in Canada?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): The member for Brome—Missisquoi has 20 seconds to respond.

Mr. Christian Ouellet: Mr. Speaker, the private sector could make that choice. But in Europe and the United States, the federal governments have always chosen the place they considered most efficient. Montreal has been chosen—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): Resuming debate. The member for Honoré-Mercier.

Mr. Pablo Rodriguez (Honoré-Mercier, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I should indicate that I will be sharing my time with the member for Don Valley West.

I am pleased to rise today to take part in this important debate on one of the most fundamental issues we are facing today, which is the protection of our environment and the future of our children.

We are once more discussing the issue of climate change, because the government refuses to understand.

I want to thank and congratulate my colleague from Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie for introducing this motion, which reads:

That the House call on the government to set fixed greenhouse gas reduction targets as soon as possible so as to meet the objectives of the Kyoto Protocol, a prerequisite for the establishment, as expeditiously as possible, of a carbon exchange in Montréal.

This motion is directly linked to my private member's bill, Bill C-288, which seeks to ensure Canada meets its global climate change obligations under the Kyoto protocol. This motion, as well as my private member's bill, are primarily focused on taking concrete action immediately for the future.

I think, however, that the motion, and my private member's bill, should not have been necessary.

Indeed, as a Canadian, I would have expected the government of my country to take action against climate change and to respect international agreements. Unfortunately, violating international law does not seem to bother this government. Nor does it seem bothered by the fact that we are headed for a climatic catastrophe and must face the irreversible consequences.

• (1335)

[English]

The Prime Minister spent his career denying the existence of climate change, questioning both the science and the need to act. Now his government has spent more than a year, consistent with its Reform and Alliance past, trying to avoid taking action, looking for sound bites, excuses, misleading statements and misinformation, instead of making good policy.

Business of Supply

That is wrong. As elected officials, we have the political and moral obligation to work toward building a better society, not only for those around us but, more important, for those who will follow us, for our children and for our grandchildren.

[*Translation*]

This is why, when it comes to climate change, failing to take action is not an option.

Let us take a moment to look at the state of our planet today. Without being alarmist, I would like to share a few facts.

We all know, for example, that atmospheric concentrations of greenhouse gases are at their highest levels in 650,000 years. We also know that 11 of the last 12 years have been the warmest years ever recorded. Average Arctic temperatures are increasing at almost twice the global average rate. Scientists have also discovered that Arctic sea ice is melting even faster than their models predicted.

[*English*]

Here is what scientists predict a rise in temperature of 2° Celsius would mean for the planet: tens of millions of environmental refugees fleeing from rising sea levels; more intense rainfalls and storms; tens of millions of additional people at risk of hunger from crop failure; and increased water shortages that could affect billions.

[*Translation*]

Add to that the economic impact, which we know would be considerable, and we can see how unacceptable, even irresponsible, the government's failure to act is.

If I may, I would like to focus for a few minutes on the economic aspect, since the Conservatives are trying to instill fear in this regard. They are trying to scare Canadians with their completely apocalyptic scenarios.

Last week, the Minister of the Environment appeared before the Standing Senate Committee on Energy, the Environment and Natural Resources, where he put on quite a show. He had one goal in mind, and that was to instill fear in all Canadians. He shouted himself hoarse as he presented a study based on false premises, a study that is incomplete. That study does not take into account all the mechanisms set out in Kyoto and claims:

—that there are no breakthroughs in current energy efficiency and other technologies pertaining to GHG emissions.

The minister does not, in fact, at any point see the campaign against climate change as an investment. His hatred of the Kyoto protocol is so strong that it renders him incapable of seeing beyond its costs. He is incapable of seeing the benefits in the short, medium or long term. He just envisages one disaster after another. For him, the beneficial impact of energy efficiency does not exist. Job creation in fields related to the new environmental technologies does not exist. The export potential of these new technologies to such countries as China, Brazil or Mexico does not exist either.

What makes me say this? Because there is no sign of any of these in his apocalyptic report. His report does not mention a single benefit. It is as if he had instructed its authors to set aside anything that was good, to take no notice of it, and to merely focus on all the bad things; to focus on all the things that will cost the most and to tell us just how much they will cost. It is as if he had done exactly

that. The minister has made a fool of himself in everyone's eyes. He has shown himself to be incompetent, so much so that he should even be apologizing.

What he does not understand is that an end must be put to this old-fashioned attitude of forcing us to make a choice between jobs and a healthy environment. In this 21st century governments need to understand that economic growth and environmental protection go hand in hand. He does not get it.

In a highly credible study, former chief economist of the World Bank Nicholas Stern has calculated that the cost of unchecked global warming would be somewhere between 5% and 20% of the world GDP. However it would cost around 1% of the GDP deal with the situation. According to Mr. Stern, addressing climate change is good for the economy and ignoring it is what is likely to create a recession in the long term.

There are, in fact, a number of examples of businesses or sectors which do consider action against climate change as fostering economic growth. British Petroleum, for example, has managed to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 10% compared to its 1990 level. It did so as long ago as 2001, nine years before the deadline, and estimates that the changes it made to achieve this have increased its worth by \$650 million.

The Forest Products Association of Canada tells us that in the last ten years, the forest industry has reduced its greenhouse gas emissions by 30% compared to 1990 levels. Why has it done so? It has done so voluntarily because this is good for the environment and also because it is good for the economy.

As the Pembina Institute has shown, it would be possible and affordable to set targets for heavy industry in line with the Kyoto protocol targets. Even in the tar sands, reaching those targets would only cost \$1 a barrel, when right now, oil from the tar sands costs \$60 a barrel.

As I said at the beginning of my speech, neither the motion nor my private member's bill should have been necessary. The government should have taken concrete measures to fight climate change, but it did not do so.

● (1340)

Instead it chose to renounce the Kyoto targets. It decided to do nothing and refused to act.

I want to say again that when a government does not comply with international law, when it does not recognize the will of the people, when it does not shoulder its responsibilities to address one of the most important challenges facing our planet, the opposition can and must force it to act.

Today's motion is an important step in the right direction, because it is clear that Canada must adopt absolute targets and establish a carbon exchange right away.

Business of Supply

That is not an end in itself, but it is a tool to reach the Kyoto targets. It is a lot more than what the government is prepared to do. The government says that it would be difficult to reach the Kyoto targets. To that, I reply that just because something is difficult to do is no reason not to try. The sheer difficulty of the task makes it more important to fight with energy, courage and determination. When one wants to find solutions, one can find solutions. They do exist. One only needs the courage and the determination to put them in place, and the government does not have that courage or that determination.

[English]

Mr. Mark Warawa (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I listened intently to my colleague across the way during his presentation. This House is still looking for answers to why the Liberals did nothing when they were in government after signing on to the Kyoto protocol. After ratifying the Kyoto protocol they continued year after year to do nothing to protect the environment.

There is proof that when the Conservatives took over government, Canada was 35% above the Kyoto target commitments. The government is committed to substantial reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. My party supports this motion, but the question that is still unanswered in the House is: Why did the Liberals not do something to clean up the environment when they were the government? Canadians want to know what was the reason for not getting the job done.

The hon. member has talked about courage. I would ask him and I have asked him many times to tell the House why his party did not get the job done when it had the chance? Why did the Liberals create the environmental mess with which we are faced?

The environment is incredibly important. Canadians want Canada to do something. We now have a government that is finally taking action on the environment. Why did the Liberals not get it done when they had a chance?

[Translation]

Mr. Pablo Rodriguez: Mr. Speaker, I wish to remind or, perhaps, inform my colleague that it was the Liberal government that signed and ratified the Kyoto protocol. Moreover, we had a green program worth \$10 billion, and more money was to come. However, a new government was elected.

We know what we had. But what do we have now from the people across the way? Inaction and a bill that was totally ridiculous initially. Bill C-30 was amended by all the opposition parties. Once amended, it was much more acceptable. However, the government is refusing to bring it back to the House of Commons.

What is its latest strategy? Fearmongering. Fear is the weapon of the weak. Fear is what people who do not want to act use.

• (1345)

Mr. Christian Ouellet (Brome—Missisquoi, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate my colleague on his speech.

He talked about the courage that one must have. I totally agree with him. It takes courage to realize that we must act faster than ever and that a year and a half has been wasted by the present

government. He also said that there are solutions that we must start to apply right now.

I would like him to say a few words about solutions that have been found and could be applied immediately, so that we do not have to listen to the Conservatives say anymore that the Liberals did nothing.

Mr. Pablo Rodriguez: Mr. Speaker, I thank our colleague for his excellent question.

Numerous actions could obviously be taken. Bill C-288 is already in the Senate, and I hope it will be adopted, at least when the Conservatives stop obstructing it. Bill C-30, as amended by our colleagues from the Bloc Québécois, by the NDP and by ourselves, is an excellent bill that includes all sorts of measures.

We know that we have to act now. As stated in the motion from the Bloc, we must certainly establish fixed reduction targets. This must clearly be done. A carbon exchange must be created. There are excellent green projects abroad in which to invest. They are accredited by the United Nations and include true reductions of greenhouse gases.

We have these solutions, but we also have other means. Regulations could make things more efficient. We are ready. We have talked and found solutions. What is missing, unfortunately, is the courage and the will on the other side of the House.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): The honourable member for Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques should know there is less than a minute left for the question and the answer.

Ms. Louise Thibault (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, I will be very brief.

As a matter of fact, speaking of courage and political will, I would just like to ask my colleague if he has any comments about Bill C-30 having been held up for a very long time. We could even say that the government is unduly holding up the process.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): The hon. member has 30 seconds to answer the question.

Mr. Pablo Rodriguez: Mr. Speaker, this is an excellent question.

Bill C-30, which was originally introduced by the Conservatives, did not contain anything for the short term. There were no objectives, no mechanisms, no timetables, nothing. Having been amended by opposition parties, it is totally acceptable and is an excellent tool to fight climate changes today. This bill is also being totally obstructed by the government, which does not want to bring it back to the House. Let us bring it back to the House so we can pass it and move to action.

[English]

Hon. John Godfrey (Don Valley West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to support the motion of the Bloc Québécois which really has two elements in it. It first talks about the importance of fixed targets, a regulated system for Canada's greenhouse gases; and second, that it has to be a precondition for the establishment of a carbon market in Montreal or indeed anywhere else in Canada.

I would like today to focus on the carbon market aspect of this and I think there are 13 important lessons when it comes to carbon markets.

Business of Supply

Lesson number one is that a carbon market, in and of itself, does not lower emissions. To be real, somebody somewhere has to be undertaking activity, whether it is industrial or agricultural, that actually demonstrably lowers greenhouse gas emissions. This is why we keep asking the minister and his parliamentary secretary for the government to show its plan, so that we can get on with establishing a carbon market.

Lesson number two for the minister is that we cannot have a carbon market if carbon emissions are treated as free if the atmosphere is treated as a waste receptacle. If emissions are free, there is nothing to trade and that is why the Liberal Party put forward its carbon budget plan to put a value on CO₂ emissions. That was further demonstrated in Bill C-30, which was amended to reflect a true climate change plan and a true clean air act.

Lesson number three follows, therefore, that to have a carbon market carbon has to have a precise value or price. It has to be determined by the market and in order for that to happen emissions have to be capped by regulation and, hence, targets. That is why our carbon budget plan said that the price of carbon for those who exceeded their budget would be \$20 in 2008, rising to \$30 in 2012. That is what it means to put a value on carbon.

Lesson number four, which follows, is that caps on emissions have to be absolute, not intensity based. I am told that it is theoretically possible to have a market with intensity based targets, but it will likely be more complex and not fungible or compatible with systems like that which have been set up in the European Union.

• (1350)

[*Translation*]

This is why the Bloc motion is so important. This motion puts the emphasis on absolute greenhouse gas reduction targets so as to meet the Kyoto targets.

[*English*]

Targets have to be tough and get tougher to create a sufficient price signal to provide incentive for the formation of a market.

[*Translation*]

We will see how tough these targets really are next Thursday, if I understood correctly, when the government's intentions will be made known.

[*English*]

Lesson number five is that a carbon trading market needs to be simple, completely transparent and liquid. It cannot be complex. It cannot be an over the counter system where only big players can understand it and participate. It has to be accessible and fair to smaller companies and to individual investors.

[*Translation*]

Lesson number six deals with quality. Credit certification must be of top quality, of top environmental transparency and integrity.

[*English*]

Lesson number seven is additionality. We cannot give credit for carbon reducing activities that would have happened anyway.

Lesson number eight is that for maximum efficiency a domestic carbon trading market has to be compatible or interconvertible with the North American market, such as the Chicago exchange, and ultimately with Europe and with the United Nations clean development mechanism. That again is why we need absolute targets to establish an absolute price.

Lesson number nine is that, as with any market, we need to give this new derivative market time to work out the bugs, to establish investor confidence and to build credibility. Both the European system and the United Nations clean development mechanism have gone through a pilot period project where mistakes were made and the learning from those mistakes was used to improve the system. Perfection is not automatic or instantaneous.

The Chicago market is essentially a voluntary market for carbon where participation is not mandatory, as it is in the European Union. Chicago, too, is learning a great deal about how to build a successful carbon market. I would note that, because the Chicago market is voluntary, carbon prices in Chicago are lower than they are in Europe. We also need to learn from these types of experiences so that we can avoid their early mistakes, and there were mistakes.

Lesson number 10 is that it is a huge political challenge to explain to the public in simple language what a carbon market actually is and why it helps. As I have said before, an atmospheric tipping fee no longer treats the atmosphere as a free waste receptacle for what we call CO₂.

Lesson number 11 is that it is extremely important that we have a carbon trading market located in Canada. Otherwise, it will end up being located in Chicago or elsewhere, which is why we need a clear signal now from the government about the nature of the system it intends to create.

That leads to lesson number 12, which is that it is critical that we get a regulated system in place as soon as possible in Canada for greenhouse gases and the carbon market.

[*Translation*]

As for lesson number 13—and I see my friends from the Bloc—it is not for me to decide between Montreal or Toronto. It is as if I was asked to choose between the Senators, the Canadiens or the Toronto Maple Leafs. Personally, I always choose the Maple Leafs, because that is where I was elected. Nevertheless, we must let the market decide, as we must let the Stanley Cup decide among these three teams; it is not up to us. Ultimately, quality will win out.

Statements by Members

● (1355)

[English]

In closing, I can certainly say that the Liberal Party supports the concept of creating a carbon trading market in Canada.

The Liberal Party also supports the development of an integrated climate change plan that deals with all the major sources of emissions in Canada, that is to say, industrial, electricity, upstream oil and gas, big industrial energy consumers, transportation, residential, commercial, agricultural and waste, but we have to be part of the only global system going, the United Nations framework convention on climate change and the Kyoto protocol, which flows from that.

We have to set ambitious fixed targets for ourselves and give it our best effort to reach them.

We have to honour our international obligations and Canada's promise to the world.

We have to save our country and our planet.

Most of all, we have to pass a better world on to our children and to their children.

A Canadian carbon trading market, wherever it is ultimately located, is a small but important part of that effort.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I found my colleague's speech this afternoon very interesting. I am very interested in the direction we are now taking in Parliament. However, I do remember the 38th Parliament, when the plan that was given out then by the environment minister for the Liberal Party was for voluntary emission standards. That was the message we heard from the Liberals: let us have voluntary emission standards for industry.

At the time, New Democrats said that we do not have voluntary drinking and driving rules. We do not have voluntary seat belt rules. We do not have a voluntary gun registry. The Liberal Party seemed to think voluntary standards for industry was the way to meet targets, and that we would have a one tonne challenge and all the average folk like me and the folks back home would turn off their light bulbs, but we would not do anything to deal with industry.

Does the hon. member now admit that for the last 13 years the Liberal policy in dealing with the environment was a complete utter failure and an embarrassment?

Hon. John Godfrey: Mr. Speaker, I am afraid the hon. member is mixing up two things.

There was a voluntary agreement with the auto sector, something, by the way, that was supported by organized labour in the form of the Canadian Auto Workers. There was not a voluntary agreement for the large final emitters, that is, the three major industrial groups that produce 50% of the greenhouse emissions in this country: heavy industrial users, upstream oil and gas, and electrical users. The system was not voluntary for them. It was to be regulated and targets were set.

He is confusing two different aspects of project green.

Mr. Mark Warawa (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the comments made by my colleague across the way. As we have said, we support the motion.

Where the carbon exchange trading occurs will be decided by the market. There is a possibility of it being in Winnipeg, Toronto, Montreal or others. We agree with him on this. We also agree that it is very important that we have a government taking action on the environment, cleaning up greenhouse gas emissions and reducing them dramatically, but a question remains.

I have asked this before and have not received an answer yet. The member did talk about mistakes made. We are not trying to lay blame, but Canadians would really like to know why, when he was a member of the government for 13 years, the Liberals did not address the issue of climate change and greenhouse emissions. Would he please tell this House why when he was in government they did not take action and why we now find ourselves over 35% above the target?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): The hon. member for Don Valley West. There is less than a minute to respond.

Hon. John Godfrey: Mr. Speaker, there are two responses to that question.

The first, of course, is that the last environment minister in the last Liberal government brought forward project green. As I have just explained to my colleague from the NDP, there were absolute regulations for heavy industry and thus for half of the emissions produced in this country. We also addressed the auto sector. In fact, there was a plan and we were bringing it in until it was upset by electoral events.

I was fascinated to hear one thing the hon. member said, which was that he supports the motion. The motion is quite precise about the government setting fixed greenhouse gas emission targets and—

● (1400)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): Order, please. It is with regret that I interrupt the hon. member. We will now go to statements by members.

I recognize the hon. member for Cariboo—Prince George.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

*[English]***SPECIAL OLYMPICS**

Mr. Richard Harris (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, June 15 will mark the 14th year for the Dick Harris Special Olympics Charity Golf Classic. At the conclusion of this great event, we will have raised over \$350,000 in support of Special Olympics programs in Prince George and the B.C. Central Interior.

These Special Olympics programs continue to be of huge benefit in helping our athletes improve their motor skills, their physical well-being and of course their self-esteem.

Statements by Members

We truly have been blessed with an abundance of citizen and corporate support over the last 14 years.

I am totally shameless when it comes to raising money for Special Olympics, and yes, even to the point of asking politicians of all political stripes to support our tournament.

I want to invite all of my colleagues in the House to bring their money and their golf clubs and take part in this great Special Olympics fundraising event. They can see me for details.

* * *

BAHA'I FESTIVAL

Hon. Bryon Wilfert (Richmond Hill, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Baha'i faith is the youngest of the world's independent religions. Baha'is live in 235 countries and territories throughout the world. They come from over 2,100 ethnic, racial and tribal groups and number some five million around the world.

Founded in Iran in 1844, the Baha'i faith was introduced to Canada in 1898. There are now some 30,000 Canadian Baha'is living in local communities spread throughout every province and territory.

Members of the Baha'i community of Richmond Hill are gathering to celebrate one of the most important holy festivals of the year. The festival of Baha'i takes place from April 20 to May 2. It commemorates a period of 12 days in 1863 when the prophet founder of the Baha'i faith made a public announcement of his divinely inspired mission to his followers.

As we celebrate in Canada, there is persecution in Iran, where the government is systematically removing people of the Baha'i faith from the military and from schools. How wonderful that we are able to celebrate in Canada.

I call on the Government of Canada to lend its voice to condemning the systematic persecution of Baha'is in Iran.

* * *

[*Translation*]

DANIELLE ALLARD AND LÉON RIVARD

Mr. Pierre Paquette (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, this year once again, Danielle Allard and Léon Rivard, two talented artists from the riding of Joliette, have been listed in Larousse's prestigious Drouot dictionary of artists. Published throughout the French-speaking world, the *Cotations des artistes 2007* is a directory of 14,400 works of contemporary artists.

Danielle Allard, who has been an artist-painter for more than 20 years, shares her knowledge and technique with her numerous students, who benefit from her passion for art and painting. Léon Rivard is an artist-painter, art professor and writer. For 38 years now, he too has been painting and sharing his knowledge with students. These two artists show their works in Quebec and in Europe, and a number of the works have already been acquired by French and Swiss art collectors.

On behalf of all my Bloc Québécois colleagues, I extend to them my heartfelt congratulations on their prolific careers and international recognition. Once again, Lanaudière and Quebec can be proud of their world renowned artists.

[*English*]

ONTARIO MUNICIPAL BOARD

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Ontario Municipal Board voted today against the people of Iroquois Falls and contrary to the public interest of northern Ontarians. At stake is the future of the dams on the Abitibi River.

The power from these dams belongs to the people of Ontario. The dams were given to Abitibi-Price to facilitate low cost paper production. It is one thing for Abitibi to walk away on a public covenant, but it is a whole other thing for northern Liberals to sell out the interests of northerners and walk away on their obligation.

Minister David Ramsay abandoned the people of Iroquois Falls. He refused to come and meet with the community and he hid behind a partisan political appointment who was parachuted into the board, a failed Liberal candidate no less, who ignored, overruled and dismissed the preponderance of evidence that was in favour of the community.

Anyone who participated in those hearings knows that the people of Iroquois Falls were sold down the river by a minister who was too lazy to show up, stand up or fight for the north.

We will remember.

* * *

PEMBROKE LUMBER KINGS

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is my distinct pleasure to rise today to offer my congratulations to the Pembroke Lumber Kings upon their capture of the Central Junior A Hockey League championship Art Bogart cup.

This team is one of the founding franchises of the CJHL and it has been 18 long years since it was crowned league champion.

Lumber Kings captain Scott Campbell proved to be a most valuable player as he led his team on a tremendous playoff run of 12 wins and just three losses.

The Lumber Kings benefit from the on-ice talents of a number of Ottawa Valley favourite sons, including Adam Brace from Eganville, Mavric Parks and Brandon Jackson from Cobden, Keith Clark from Pembroke, Ben Reinhardt and Zach Wilson from Arnprior, and Renfrew's Sean Crozier.

The Pembroke Lumber Kings are supported by some of the very best and most loyal fans in all of eastern Ontario. When Canada's number one hockey fan, the Prime Minister, visited the upper Ottawa Valley to salute the troops this past December, he was presented with his very own Lumber Kings Hockey Town Canada jersey.

On behalf of the legions of fans from Hockey Town Canada and all across the upper Ottawa Valley, we wish the Kings the best of luck at the Fred Page cup.

Statements by Members

●(1405)

ST. LAWRENCE SEAWAY

Mr. John Maloney (Welland, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the St. Lawrence Seaway officially opened on March 20, 2007, establishing a new record for the earliest opening date. The 2007 shipping season marks the 75th anniversary of the fourth Welland Canal, which opened in 1932.

In a more environmentally sensitive climate, more people recognize that marine transportation is the most fuel efficient way of moving cargo while generating the lowest total volume of greenhouse gas emissions.

Sometimes dubbed the H₂O highway, the seaway recorded a 9% increase in tonnage during the 2006 shipping season, reflecting the growing importance of shortsea shipping in complementing the road and rail infrastructure networks.

Currently there is still the capacity to increase cargo volume by over 60%. This is a tremendous opportunity in light of clogged land based arteries and an increasing desire among corporations to improve their energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions.

The Welland Canal was an engineering marvel of its time in 1932 and continues to be an integral part of the Niagara economy and our local culture in Port Colborne, Welland, Thorold and St. Catharines.

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[*Translation*]**ISRAEL**

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lotbinière—Chutes-de-la-Chaudière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have a message to deliver on this the 59th anniversary of the independence of Israel.

I would like to add my voice to that of my colleagues in extending my most sincere wishes to the members of the Jewish community in Quebec and Canada on this occasion.

Since 1948, the State of Israel has been a bulwark of liberty. It is also the only true democracy in the Middle East.

In the face of numerous threats of global terrorism, we know that we can always count on Israel being on the frontline of defence of the free world, as it has been ever since it was established.

In the context of World War II, Winston Churchill said that never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few. These words aptly reflect our gratitude and commitment to that country.

When the partition plan of the British mandate in the Middle East was voted on in 1947, Israel was able to count on Canada.

I state proudly that Israel will always be able to count on the support of the members of this House.

Happy *Yom Haatsmaout*.

ALEXANDRE MORIN

Ms. Christiane Gagnon (Québec, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in February, Quebec was shocked by the tragic disappearance of a promising young cyclist, Alexandre Morin.

The victim of an accident during his daily training run, Alexandre was found after an intensive search lasting several days. Hundreds of volunteers had mobilized and worked together to find him.

Last Sunday, participants in the Classique Chlorophylle, the opening competition of the cycling season in the Quebec City area, were inspired by that same feeling of solidarity.

This first race was dedicated to Alexandre's memory, and a minute of silence was observed in his honour before the junior racers set off. The cyclists, especially his younger sister Anne-Marie and his good friend William Garneau, all raced in tribute to Alexandre.

In a way, Alexandre continues to inspire all those he touched with his kindness, his determination and his energy.

* * *

[*English*]**NIGERIA ELECTION**

Mr. Deepak Obhrai (Calgary East, CPC): Mr. Speaker, a presidential election important to all of the African region took place in Nigeria on April 21. Nigerians turned out to vote, despite long wait times and the potential for violence and intimidation. It is commendable that despite these deterrents, Nigerians remained determined to exercise their right to vote. I applaud their commitment to the democratic process.

The Government of Canada is deeply concerned about reports from international and domestic observers of serious irregularities. Observer groups have said that the election has failed to meet international standards. We agree with that assessment.

We urge Nigeria to quickly address all the shortcomings of the April 21 election through appropriate judicial measures. There must be credible avenues of redress so that Nigerians' confidence in their democratic institutions is not further eroded.

Canada stands ready to support the many Nigerians who want to make democracy succeed in their country.

* * *

[*Translation*]**NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK**

Mr. Bernard Patry (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, National Volunteer Week took place from April 15 to 21.

I want to express my sincere appreciation to all the volunteers in my riding who, through their individual efforts and their many associations and organizations, contribute actively to improving the lives of people throughout our community.

This year's theme was "Volunteers grow community". I feel that this theme is very appropriate and very much appreciated, because volunteers give a great deal of their time and energy to help people with all sorts of needs. Volunteers transform our community into a great place to live. And thanks to their kindness and generosity of spirit, our volunteers truly grow and better our community.

The contributions of these outstanding citizens and their organizations deserve to be fully recognized. Without them, the very soul of our community life would be diminished. We offer them our heartfelt thanks and appreciation.

* * *

●(1410)

[English]

IMMUNIZATION AWARENESS

Mr. Steven Fletcher (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia, CPC): Mr. Speaker, April 22 to 28, 2007 is National Immunization Awareness Week.

In the last 50 years immunization has saved more lives in Canada than any other health intervention. When effective new vaccines become available, it is in the best interests of Canadian families to receive them as quickly as possible.

In July 2006 the government approved a vaccine against HPV for use by young girls and women that prevents the majority of cancers of the cervix. The government will provide \$300 million in funding to support the provinces and territories in launching programs for the HPV vaccine. This funding will allow for timely access to this life-saving measure.

Please join me in wishing the Canadian Coalition for Immunization Awareness and Promotion and the provincial and territorial health authorities success for this year's immunization awareness campaign.

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PUBLIC SAFETY OFFICERS

Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the men and women who put their lives on the line to protect their fellow Canadians deserve our highest regard. We stand in solidarity with the firefighters who are on Parliament Hill today.

In the last Parliament by a vote of 161 to 112, Parliament voted to establish a national benefit for the families of fallen and permanently disabled firefighters. The motion was put forward by the member for Burnaby—New Westminster. We want this motion to be fully implemented.

I have also put forward a motion to establish a federally funded Canadian public safety officer compensation fund payable to the survivors of a firefighter, police or public safety officer killed or permanently disabled in the line of duty.

We also know that implementation of budget promises for the hazardous materials training program for all first responders is critical to the safety of local communities and the safety of our first responders.

Statements by Members

We call on the government to move swiftly on these key issues for firefighters which for too long have remained without action.

* * *

ARMENIA

Hon. Jim Karygiannis (Scarborough—Agincourt, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, one year ago today the Minister of Foreign Affairs reaffirmed Parliament's voice to recognize the Armenian and Pontian genocides perpetrated on the people of Armenia and Pontus by the Ottoman Empire.

However, questions arise when the Canadian Ambassador to Turkey speaks for the government and he states:

It is not fun to be accused of having committed genocide. It is about influence, it is about making sure that they have enough knowledge to make a decision that makes sense, and it is about talking to them and telling them their [Turkey's] side of the story. In this case I believe that Turkey started much too late to tell its side of the story.

When will the minister recall the ambassador, or is this yet another flip-flop?

* * *

[Translation]

THE ARMENIAN PEOPLE

Ms. Nicole Demers (Laval, BQ): Mr. Speaker, today, we commemorate the 92nd anniversary of the Armenian genocide.

[Member spoke in Armenian as follows:]

High a'zke hin jogho-vourt men est.

Tze'r tratsi shad me ayl joghovourt-ne'r anhe' -da-tse'r e'n, payts Touk verab-radz ek, bahelo'v Tzer lezoon, tzer kire're, tzer'r avantou-tiun-ne're.

[Translation]

As a Bloc Québécois member, I made it a duty to learn your history and its tragedies. Over the years, I have developed a friendship with several members of your community, and this has enabled me to get to know your heroes, your poets and your artists. This is why today I have an even greater admiration for your people.

[Member spoke in Armenian as follows:]

Gue'tse high jogho-vourte.

* * *

[English]

ISRAEL

Mrs. Susan Kadis (Thornhill, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride that I stand here today to mark the celebration of Israel's independence.

On its 59th birthday, it is imperative to remember that Israel was conceived as a nation out of one of the darkest days in our collective history, the Holocaust. It is from that deep anguish that great hope was born and Israel was established. Today more than ever we must pledge to protect Israel against those who brazenly seek its destruction.

Oral Questions

Right now, proud Israelis are filling the streets wearing blue and white, singing and dancing with pride in their country.

Today we celebrate not only another year on the calendar, but rejoice in the freedom, democracy and perseverance that is Israel. The desert land that was once nothing more than a dream and a vision has since become a beautiful, thriving state filled with the richness of history and booming urban centres. It is a remarkable feat that Israel has become a leader in the 21st century of discoveries and innovation despite these challenges.

I look forward to sharing in the great spirit of Israel's Independence Day today and in the years to come.

* * *

• (1415)

RAIL SAFETY

Mr. Joe Preston (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to acknowledge this week as Operation Lifesaver Safety Week in Canada.

Operation Lifesaver is a national public education program made up of volunteers whose mission it is to promote rail safety and to reduce the needless loss of life, injuries and damage caused by crossing collisions and trespassing incidents.

This week communities across the country will be participating in numerous activities, including everything from mock collisions to crossing blitzes and trespassing enforcement exercises. These activities are sure to hit home and will make Canadians understand that safety is no game.

To mark rail safety week, our government has announced more than \$10.4 million for 103 safety improvement projects at railway crossings across Canada. This funding will allow us to continue to work with rail companies and communities to improve safety of rail crossings for motorists and pedestrians throughout Canada.

We believe that by promoting public awareness of rail safety we can help save lives.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[Translation]

AFGHANISTAN

Mr. Michael Ignatieff (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last month—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

[English]

The Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Etobicoke—Lakeshore has the floor. We want to be able to hear his question.

[Translation]

Mr. Michael Ignatieff: Mr. Speaker, last month, the Minister of National Defence went to Kandahar to look the head of the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission straight in the eyes.

Yesterday, he told this House that the commission “has the authority to go into the Afghan system”. Today, we learn that their people cannot even set foot there.

Why does this government refuse to immediately stop transferring prisoners until an assessment is done?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have been informed that our government and our forces in Afghanistan are in communication with the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission. We are continuing to offer all possible assistance. Until now, we did not have the information that is being reported today in the papers. If there are problems, the government will work with the independent Afghan commission to solve them.

[English]

Mr. Michael Ignatieff (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, Lib.): So, Mr. Speaker, the transfers will not be stopped. That is unacceptable.

We have heard from minister after minister that the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission will monitor prisoners transferred by Canada. Yesterday the Prime Minister told the House that the government would “ensure that they have the capacity to undertake their terms of the agreement”, but this is ridiculous.

The Afghan commission has seven staff and no access to prisons. Why did the Prime Minister not ensure that the commission had this capacity before signing the agreement and before telling the House, on countless occasions, that it could do the job?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, once again, our officials are in ongoing communication with the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission. We have offered any help that is necessary. We are not at the moment told of the problems that have been reported in the papers today. Obviously, if there are such problems, we will act.

However, we have an arrangement. We are working on that. We believe we are moving forward on the arrangement.

I can say once again for the hon. member, the suggestion by his leader that we would bring Taliban prisoners to Canada is not the position this government would take. We are in Afghanistan to prevent the Taliban from coming to Canada.

Mr. Michael Ignatieff (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, so the transfers go on. Once again, it is unacceptable.

The government's handling of the whole affair has been disgraceful. The Prime Minister and the Minister of National Defence do not seem to understand that the honour of Canada is at stake. We need to ensure that our military uphold the best traditions it has always upheld, of complying with the Geneva convention.

There is no conceivable reason to keep this mission under the control of a minister who does not seem to know which way is up. Will the Prime Minister stop this sickening charade and fire that Minister of National Defence?

Oral Questions

• (1420)

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, once again, as I said, officials from the Government of Canada and from the military are in constant communication with not just the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission, but with other agencies of the Government of Afghanistan to ensure that the arrangements are being respected. If they are not being respected, we will obviously act.

However, I should say this. I think what is disgraceful is to simply accept the allegations of some Taliban suspects at face value. That is not appropriate for a Canadian member of Parliament. I will tell the House what else is inappropriate, the position of the deputy leader of the Liberal Party who said that he—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Westmount—Ville-Marie.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Lucienne Robillard (Westmount—Ville-Marie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government cannot skate around this question. It is the government's duty to inform Canadians immediately.

What is the status of Afghan prisoners? How many have been transferred? What is their current situation? Have they been tortured, yes or no, and is there any risk of torture? Canada's reputation is at stake. It is time the minister answered the questions Canadians are asking.

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there are some serious allegations. At the same time, we are working with the Afghan government and the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission to ensure that such things do not happen.

[*English*]

Mr. Speaker, what I do have to say, and you did not give me a chance to say it, is the deputy leader of the Liberal Party said that he favoured “indefinite detention of suspects, coercive interrogations, targeted assassinations, even pre-emptive war”. Those are the exact words of the deputy leader of the Liberal Party. Those are not the positions of the Government of Canada.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Lucienne Robillard (Westmount—Ville-Marie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Westmount—Ville-Marie. We will have a little order.

Hon. Lucienne Robillard: Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister remains true to form. He has never been able to take responsibility for his own actions. He is being asked some very simple questions here today. Since the Conservative government signed the new agreement, what has been happening to detainees and prisoners? Has anyone visited them? In what conditions are they being held?

If the Minister of National Defence is incapable of answering some simple questions, why does the Prime Minister continue to place his trust in that minister?

[*English*]

Hon. Gordon O'Connor (Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I have said on a number of occasions, the

Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission is charged with inspecting the Afghan prisons. If there are difficulties in the Afghan prisons, the commission will inform us. To this date, it has not informed us.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, first the Red Cross was supposedly monitoring the prisoners transferred to the Afghan authorities. That was not true. The minister is now saying that he has concluded an agreement with the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission, which will report to him on the detention conditions of the prisoners. Today we learn that the commission does not have access to all the prisoners, that it lacks resources and that it cannot report to the Minister of National Defence.

How can the Prime Minister still have confidence in his Minister of National Defence when he is telling us falsehoods about the commission, just like he did with the Red Cross?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, again, I know there is regular contact between the Canadian Forces, the Government of Canada, the government of Afghanistan and the independent commission. To date we have no evidence that supports the allegations. However, I have asked the officers to continue their consultations and to establish whether there is a problem. So far the allegations have not been substantiated.

• (1425)

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Minister of National Defence described stories of torture as rumours while the Prime Minister, yesterday and today, spoke of serious allegations, and therefore risks. Under the Geneva convention, the transfer of prisoners is prohibited in situations where there is torture, and even in cases where there is a risk of mistreatment.

In light of these serious allegations, does the Prime Minister realize that he may be asking the troops to break the law and that he is shirking his responsibilities by not respecting the Geneva convention?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Forces take their responsibilities seriously. That is why we have a new arrangement and that is why they continue to consult the Afghan authorities to ensure that we are assuming our responsibilities. The allegation that the Canadian Forces are shirking their major responsibilities is irresponsible. The Leader of the Bloc Québécois has no evidence of that.

Mr. Claude Bachand (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Minister of National Defence declared that he had received personal assurances from the representative of the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission that all mistreatment of transferred prisoners would be reported to Canada. That same representative also said that he does not have enough staff and that he himself had been refused access to the prisons. That means there is a problem.

In light of all of these disturbing facts, how can the Prime Minister justify his inaction? Is he aware that the Geneva Convention has been violated and that he is endorsing this treatment of prisoners?

*Oral Questions**[English]*

Hon. Gordon O'Connor (Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our military officials in the Kandahar area are in regular contact with the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission representatives there. They have not raised any issues of abuse. We have offered them all the support with respect to resources or access to the Afghan system if they need it from us.

[Translation]

Mr. Claude Bachand (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, yesterday Afghanistan's ambassador to Canada said that Canadian prisons in Afghanistan were out of the question.

If Canada cannot have prisons in Afghanistan, and if it cannot transfer prisoners to Afghan prisons where they will be tortured in violation of the Geneva convention, what is the Prime Minister planning to do to solve this problem once and for all?

[English]

Hon. Gordon O'Connor (Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have an agreement with the Afghan government. We also have an arrangement with the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission. The way we will operate is we will enforce these arrangements. We will make certain that the Afghans do their part as we do our part.

[Translation]

Hon. Jack Layton (Toronto—Danforth, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is obvious that Canada is not well served by a Minister of National Defence who does not have a proper understanding of the Geneva convention, a minister who will say anything to hide his incompetence, a minister who is now asking our troops to continue transferring detainees to torturers or so-called torturers. That is not acceptable.

When will the Prime Minister put an end to this farce, stop the transfers and fire the minister?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Forces are operating and consulting with their Afghan counterparts. They are honouring their commitments and constantly consulting with their counterparts to ensure that we fulfill our obligations.

Allegations to the effect that we are not living up to our responsibilities are only being made by the Taliban. I do not accept these unfounded Taliban allegations.

• (1430)

[English]

Hon. Jack Layton (Toronto—Danforth, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of National Defence misled the House again yesterday. He claimed that these allegations were simply rumours and that the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission would be responsible for the situation. Now we learn that the head of that commission is barred from going to the prisons.

What more does it take for the Prime Minister to issue an instruction to his incompetent Minister of National Defence that the transfers should stop now pending the truth? Why will he not stand up and make that instruction today?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Very simply, Mr. Speaker, as I have repeated several times, our forces, the Government of Canada, the Department of Foreign Affairs are in constant touch with their Afghan counterparts on these very issues. We do not have evidence that what the hon. member alleges is true.

To suggest the Canadian Forces would deliberately violate the Geneva convention and to make that suggestion solely based on the allegations of the Taliban is the height of irresponsibility.

Hon. Denis Coderre (Bourassa, Lib.): How low can one go, Mr. Speaker?

[Translation]

Since late 2004 and early 2005, a special team established by Canada's Department of National Defence has been directly advising President Karzai in order to put in place a governance and development monitoring structure in Afghanistan. Sixteen Canadian Forces officers are helping the Afghan government to establish the rule of law. This is far from being a military operation.

Can the minister confirm that this strategic advisory team, Operation ARGUS, that reports directly to the chief of the defence staff was aware of the situation of the Taliban prisoners?

[English]

Hon. Gordon O'Connor (Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the strategic advisory team in Kabul advised the government on organization. It has explained to the various departments how it gets projects accomplished, how it achieves goals.

[Translation]

Hon. Denis Coderre (Bourassa, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we will come back to that.

[English]

There is more evidence that the defence minister is incompetent. We had to learn about the treatment of 30 detainees through the media and not through the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission, as the minister assured us we would.

I again look the minister straight in the eyes. Will the minister admit that he learned about allegations of torture through the media and that his arrangement with the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission is a sham? When will the Minister of National Defence realize that the only way to protect our reputation in the world is to resign?

Hon. Gordon O'Connor (Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I have said, the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission is in regular contact with our people. If it needs any assistance, we will provide that assistance. To date, it has not asked for any assistance.

Hon. Karen Redman (Kitchener Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for nearly a year, the Minister of National Defence has misled this House about the role of the Red Cross, insisting that it was responsible for supervising the treatment of detainees transferred to the Afghan authorities.

When the international Red Cross publicly corrected the minister, he was forced to apologize to this House.

Oral Questions

Could the minister tell Canadians what immediate steps he is taking to verify that detainees captured by Canadian Forces in Afghanistan and transferred to Afghan authorities are being properly treated?

Hon. Gordon O'Connor (Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government has asked a number of officials to contact the various elements of the Afghan government that have to do with detainees to confirm whether there is any truth to the rumours and allegations that are in the media and they will report back to us. If there is any foundation for this, we will be dealing with the Afghan government to ensure that they are corrected.

Hon. Karen Redman (Kitchener Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the minister has repeatedly said that the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission, which has publicly admitted to only having seven staff members and no capacity to monitor prisoner abuse in Afghanistan, is looking after things.

Once again, the defence minister is either greatly misinformed or is simply misleading this House. The minister was not aware of the role of the Red Cross. He was not aware of the inability of the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission to do its job. Now he says that he is unable to answer questions about the abuse of detainees.

Does the Minister of National Defence still have the confidence of the Prime Minister?

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

• (1435)

The Speaker: Order, please. The hon. the Minister of National Defence now has the floor to answer the question he was asked. We will have a little order so the member for Kitchener Centre at least can hear the answer.

Hon. Gordon O'Connor (Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, both the leaders of the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission in Kabul and in Kandahar have confirmed that they can do what we have asked them to do. Our people are in constant contact with them and they have not asked for any help. They are on sort of a regular basis meeting with them but they have not asked for any help because they believe they can do what they have been tasked to do.

* * *

[*Translation*]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Bernard Bigras (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, in Montreal, the Quebec business community was bitterly disappointed by the Minister of the Environment, who refused to allow our industries to have access to European or Asian carbon exchanges.

Does the minister realize that his refusal is not only a threat to the environment, but also to Quebec's economy, because it prevents our businesses from having access to a market that could exceed \$70 billion, and it also prevents them from selling their excess credits on those markets?

Hon. John Baird (Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, we made it very clear that we support the

mechanisms included in the Kyoto protocol. The Bloc Québécois members who supported the protocol are saying that it is acceptable to send public money to Europe and to countries such as Russia and Ukraine, without real reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. However, that is not acceptable to this government, to Quebeckers and to Canadians.

Mr. Bernard Bigras (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is disappointing to see that a minister still does not understand the real issues relating to carbon exchange. In Quebec, whether it is the business community, environmentalists or the National Assembly, everyone agrees that we need absolute greenhouse gas reduction targets.

Why does the minister stubbornly keep talking about intensity-based targets, when he knows full well that, by reducing the intensity of their emissions by 15%, tar sands operators in Alberta will be able to freely increase them by 179% in absolute terms? Why support oil companies at the expense of the environment and of Quebec?

Hon. John Baird (Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have been very clear on this issue. We have wanted real greenhouse gas reductions for a long time. What is not an option is not doing anything. For 13 long years, the former Liberal government, with the presence of the Bloc Québécois in this House, did absolutely nothing for the environment. This government is taking action. This team from Quebec and Canada is taking action to improve and to help our environment.

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille (Beauharnois—Salaberry, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of the Environment would have us believe that by setting intensity targets, he is dealing with greenhouse gas reductions in a meaningful way. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Can the minister explain how he plans to reduce pollution by reducing the amount of pollution per barrel while quadrupling oil sands production between now and 2015?

Hon. John Baird (Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, clearly the Bloc Québécois does not support economic growth. We have a good, balanced plan that will help our environment and our economy. That is very important.

The previous government did nothing for 10 years. It had bad environmental policies, and now it wants to replace them with bad policies for our environment. That is unacceptable.

We are taking action and we will continue to take real action for our environment.

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille (Beauharnois—Salaberry, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the minister's apocalyptic study indicates that the cost of thermal electricity production will rise by 60%. That conclusion totally disregards the reality of energy production in Quebec.

Is the minister using this catastrophic scenario to please the Alberta oil companies while asking Quebec to pay for other people's pollution?

• (1440)

Hon. John Baird (Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, these amounts are national figures based on averages.

Oral Questions

It is all too clear that the Bloc Québécois supported the Liberal Party and its bill without knowing the economic costs.

I have a good question for the Bloc Québécois. Will it release its economic costs and the consequences of its actions to the House of Commons? This House is waiting, Quebecers are waiting, and Canadians are waiting.

* * *

[English]

AFGHANISTAN

Hon. Diane Marleau (Sudbury, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the defence minister has been careless with the facts and incompetent when it comes to defending the government's murky foreign policy positions and responding to Canadians' concerns.

Whether it is the treatment of detainees or the scope and length of Canada's current Afghan mission, in terms of clarity, the government continues to mislead Canadians.

Last summer, Parliament voted to extend the combat mission to February 2009. Will the Prime Minister respect the results of today's upcoming vote—

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of National Defence.

Hon. Gordon O'Connor (Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our military commitment is to the end of February 2009.

[Translation]

Hon. Diane Marleau (Sudbury, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians want straight answers to questions about Canada's international reputation and our troops' involvement in southern Afghanistan.

When will Canadians finally see a clear plan to end the combat mission?

Does the Prime Minister plan to wait until it is too late to withdraw our troops from southern Afghanistan before making a decision?

[English]

Hon. Gordon O'Connor (Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will be as clear as I can. Our military commitment at the moment is to the end of February 2009.

Hon. Ujjal Dosanjh (Vancouver South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, less than a year ago, the government pressed Parliament into extending the Afghan mission to February 2009. Our motion before the House simply confirms that commitment. However, we know that the government is getting ready to vote against the motion today.

Why is the government refusing to provide clarity to Canadians and to our troops on an end date for the combat role in Afghanistan?

Hon. Gordon O'Connor (Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are providing clarity. We support our troops and we support them in their mission and we will provide whatever they need to accomplish their mission.

Again, the military mission at the moment is committed to the end of February 2009.

Hon. Ujjal Dosanjh (Vancouver South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, among other things, the Minister of National Defence keeps insisting that the government will pull our troops out in February 2009.

If this is true, when does he plan on informing our NATO allies that this is the case so they have the time they may need to prepare for the end of our combat role in Afghanistan?

Hon. Gordon O'Connor (Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our military commitment at this moment is to the end of February 2009. I do not know how many times I can say that but I will keep saying it as long as they keep asking.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Dean Allison (Niagara West—Glanbrook, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the member for Ottawa South kept up his game of smoke and mirrors by claiming that the 2005 Liberal environmental plan, project green, had been fully funded by the previous Liberal government.

Would the Minister of the Environment please expose the shell game being played by the Liberal environmental critic?

Hon. John Baird (Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, if he insists, I will. The following is what the former environment commissioner had to say about the Liberal Party's record. She said:

As of 2005, it was \$6.3 billion that had been announced. In terms of spending, at the end of the 2003-04 fiscal year \$1.6 billion had been spent.

In fact, the commissioner found it hard to substantiate the \$1.6 billion that the Liberals claimed that they had spent. What we do not know is how much of this money ended up in brown envelopes over the tables of restaurants.

• (1445)

[Translation]

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives have not taken any concrete action on climate change. After hundreds of hours of work by all parties in committee, after a successful rewrite of the clean air act, the Minister of the Environment is going to throw everything out the window. But members of all the parties worked together on this. That is what ordinary Canadians want to see.

Why does the minister not bring the clean air act before the House so that the members can adopt it?

[English]

Hon. John Baird (Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have said nothing of the kind. In fact, I think the clean air act has a lot of important components, one being the capacity to engage in provincial equivalency agreements. We have had the fact that we want to bring in regulations for air pollutants, which is very important. Energy efficiency components in the bill are very important but, most important, as the Minister of Agriculture announced yesterday, are the measures in the bill for our biofuels sector. We would like all those things to be the law.

Oral Questions

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, what was true on day one is even more true now and that is that Canadians no longer trust the Conservatives to protect the environment. They are in desperate need of some adult supervision.

The minister will not even let his own clean air act come before this House for debate so that ordinary Canadians can compare it to the half measures that his government has presented.

Why will the government not get behind the process that the NDP created that was supported by all members in the House? Where is the minister's courage and his bravado when the time has come to put his convictions forward and bring the bill back to the House?

Hon. John Baird (Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have indicated very clearly that we have serious concerns about parts of that bill. One of the concerns that we have involves the Liberals' proposals that were put into the bill. What they said is that there would be an unlimited licence to pollute.

This causes us great concern. We do not support an unlimited licence to pollute. That is the Liberal policy. That is the same Liberal Party that wanted taxpayers to backstop polluters, something that this government just cannot support.

[Translation]

Hon. John Godfrey (Don Valley West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of the Environment's apocalyptic report is deeply flawed. But how can we win the fight of our generation if our hands are tied? Bill C-30, as amended by the committee, enables Canadians to use all the tools available to them under the Kyoto protocol.

Why can the minister not decide whether he will bring the bill to a vote? When will he make up his mind?

[English]

Hon. John Baird (Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member chairs the committee for a party that did not get the job done over 13 long years. The member chairs the Liberal committee that brought out a proposal that is not compliant with Kyoto. The member also voted for Bill C-288.

Let us look at what the *National Post* and Don Martin said about Bill C-288:

Look, anyone who believes Canada can actually meet its Kyoto obligations on schedule without serious economic complications is a common sense denier.

Hon. John Godfrey (Don Valley West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last fall the Environment Commissioner reported that Canada can reach 21% of its Kyoto targets each year annually through a domestic offset and trading system, but the government's own Kyoto report last week announced that it would never allow such a system to be used.

Between Chicken Little's report and his refusal to be clear about Bill C-30, one thing has become clear. The government is doing everything it can to do nothing about global warming.

We all know now what the Conservatives will not do, so can the minister finally tell us what percentage of Kyoto he is willing to—

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of the Environment.

Hon. John Baird (Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government accepts its responsibilities to clean up the

mess that the previous Liberal government left us. The government understands the important science and environmental consequences of global action.

What I can tell the member opposite is what is not an option: sitting back and watching harmful greenhouse gas emissions rise. We want to see them decline. We have come forward with a number of initiatives and we will continue to do that.

* * *

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Mr. Gary Merasty (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the sad legacy of the residential school era is well known to most Canadians, except for the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development who believes these schools were simply set up to educate.

In fact, they were not. They were set up to assimilate a people against their will. They were places of disease, hunger, overcrowding and despair. Many children died. In 1914 a departmental official said "fifty per cent of the children who passed through these schools did not live to benefit from the education which they had received therein". Yet, nothing was done.

I ask the Prime Minister again, would he please apologize to the residential school survivors?

• (1450)

Hon. Jim Prentice (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I intend to fully proceed with the implementation of the residential school agreement which was concluded on May 10, 2006.

In the time since that date, there has been an approval by the court of this agreement and 10,310 individuals have received advance payments. A truth and reconciliation commission is being set up.

I intend to continue to fully implement the terms and conditions of what I consider to be a fair, honourable and generous agreement.

Mr. Gary Merasty (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, above all else, I stand for these children, many of whom buried their friends, families and siblings at these schools.

Oral Questions

Last year the Prime Minister complimented aboriginal British colonial policies as the most generous of the period. Today we are fortunate our children do not have to suffer what aboriginal children endured through these supposed generous policies of the residential school era, of which the Prime Minister is such a big fan.

I ask that we all think about this for a moment as we go forward and think about what is really fair. Will the Prime Minister commit to the repatriation of the bodies and an apology to the residential school survivors?

Hon. Jim Prentice (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member goes too far in his question.

I spoke to the media about this subject on Friday. I will say now what I said then. I have three daughters myself. The thought of losing any of them is unimaginable. The thought that they would go away to a school and never return is something I cannot even contemplate.

We will get to the bottom of the disappeared children. The truth and reconciliation commission will hear much about that. I have instructed our officials to look into that and to work with oblate records of the churches to get to the bottom of this issue, and this sad chapter in our history.

* * *

[Translation]

HIGHWAY INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. Robert Bouchard (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, reconstruction of highway 175 in the Parc des Laurentides has begun. The official in the Minister of Transport's office who is responsible for the construction has stated that the necessary funds are in place. No one in our region has any doubts about the reconstruction.

Why then, all of a sudden, in the middle of construction, is the Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec throwing into question the funding for this project? Does his government intend to backpedal and stop the project?

Hon. Lawrence Cannon (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague is asking a question with an obvious answer. The government is moving forward. My colleague, the Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, has spoken about the benefits of this project.

As has been the case these past 15 months, the government promised to get things done, and we keep our promises.

* * *

CANADA LANDS CORPORATION

Mr. Thierry St-Cyr (Jeanne-Le Ber, BQ): Here is another example of an announcement with no financial commitment, Mr. Speaker.

Last Friday, the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities gave the Canada Lands Corporation the mandate to

develop the site of the Ottawa Street mail sorting facility, in southwestern Montreal. While the purpose of this initiative is to clean up contaminated land, the government did not announce any funding for the initiative.

Beyond the rhetoric, could the minister responsible for Canada Post and the Canada Lands Corporation tell us how much money will actually be put toward the cleanup operation on the site of the mail handling facility and Montreal's new harbourfront, and when?

Hon. Lawrence Cannon (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, CPC): Mr. Speaker, had the member followed the issue at all, he would have seen that we have actually transferred nearly five million square feet of land to the Canada Lands Corporation, which will ensure the harmonious development of greater Montreal. This is a first, and we on this side of the House are very proud of the work done in that regard.

* * *

[English]

ZIMBABWE

Hon. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Robert Mugabe is engaged in massive human rights violations against his own people. Zimbabweans now have the shortest lifespan in the world, a shocking 33 years. Sadly, the Conservative government sees nothing beyond Afghanistan and as a result millions suffer due to this negligence.

If the Conservative government is not willing to reverse the cuts that it made to aid for the country, or indict President Robert Mugabe for crimes against humanity, will it at least do the right thing and expel the Zimbabwean high commissioner to Canada, and do it now?

● (1455)

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is unfortunate that the member opposite chooses to politicize an issue such as this, that is so serious.

We agree with him. The monstrous behaviour of President Mugabe is one that should be condemned by all, which I and the parliamentary secretary have done publicly. We continue to work on all multilateral mechanisms to bring about some compliance with universal standards of human rights and good governance.

We are going to continue to work on this issue, not withdraw from this issue, as the hon. member would suggest.

* * *

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Mr. Gerald Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal and NDP opponents of the new fisheries act have been touring Atlantic Canada, intentionally fearmongering. They say that the new act will prevent fishers from transferring their licences.

Oral Questions

Could the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans assure hard-working fishers that the existing process for transferring their licences will remain absolutely 100% unchanged in the new fisheries act?

Hon. Loyola Hearn (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, CPC): Mr. Speaker, first of all, let me assure anybody involved in the fishery that in relation to disposing their assets, nothing has changed at all. Whatever they could do in the old act, they will be able to do in the new act, if we ever get it through the House.

However, we have made it easier for them with the help of the member who just asked the question. We brought in the capital gains break for them, up to \$750,000 or no limit within the family. We have also, in fisheries renewal, made it possible for them to buy each other out. We are encouraging that rather than trying to stop it.

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AUTOMOBILE INDUSTRY

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, poor trade policies by the Liberals and now the Conservatives have put the auto industry in reverse.

The minister knows that a few years ago Canada was the fourth largest automaker in the world. Now we have dropped to 10th. The minister also knows that Canada has a \$3 billion trade deficit with South Korea. The minister also knows that right now Toyota has surpassed General Motors in auto production and Canada has become a net importer of cars.

Despite all that, the minister has yet to table an auto plan in this House. How can that be? Why is the minister willing to sell us out with a deal with South Korea costing us Canadian jobs without examining the situation?

Hon. David Emerson (Minister of International Trade and Minister for the Pacific Gateway and the Vancouver-Whistler Olympics, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what is true is that the government is committed to supporting our exporters, and to negotiating free trade agreements that will give our exporters fairer access to international markets, competitive access with respect to competitors in the United States, Australia, and many other countries that we are competing with. We need trade agreements.

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, free trade with South Korea just cannot be on Korea's terms and the minister has already indicated how desperate he is. The minister claimed, "My reputation will live or die on it". I am predicting an early demise of the minister's ego.

The minister has not consulted auto makers, has not consulted auto workers, and has not brought substantial changes to make sure non-tariff barriers are eliminated. That is the real problem.

I am glad to know that the minister understands his personal reputation is on the line, but what is he going to do to get it off life support now?

Hon. David Emerson (Minister of International Trade and Minister for the Pacific Gateway and the Vancouver-Whistler Olympics, CPC): Mr. Speaker, through that smoke and partisan rhetoric I could not quite discern a real question.

The bottom line is our exporters need competitive access to the global marketplace. We need to be opening up markets. We need to

open up the market in Korea. We need to open up the markets in Europe and Asia. That is what we are doing. We are putting our exporters back on a level playing field that they were knocked off of because of 10 years of neglect of the trade agenda.

The Speaker: The hon. member for Halton.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Halton has the floor. I am sure he appreciates all the suggestions for his question, but I think he probably has one prepared and we will hear it now.

* * *

INCOME TRUSTS

Hon. Garth Turner (Halton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadian investors, many of them seniors, have asked the Minister of Finance repeatedly to reconsider his income trust bombshell and that shattered election promise. The minister is not listening. Instead, the minister decided on his website to run a poll asking Canadians to vote on the budget that contains that tax. The result: 93% said no way.

Will the minister now do what Canadians want and pull that unfair tax the same way he pulled his poll?

• (1500)

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I continue to be amazed that the member for Halton shows up here in the House of Commons since he so profoundly believed that people who crossed the floor should have to submit to a byelection. We kept anticipating it.

In fact, this is what he said about people who cross the floor:

I have been asked to change. I refuse to change. I will stand for what I believe. I didn't knock on all those doors to sell out. It ain't going to happen.

Guess what, it happened, and we should not be surprised because he is the guy who wanted pension income splitting and then he sold out, crossed the floor, and voted against pension income splitting.

Business of Supply

[Translation]

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Daniel Petit (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Clermont Bégin is a dangerous offender who was sentenced to 11 years in prison for sexual assault with a weapon, aggravated assault, attempted murder, kidnapping and forcible confinement. These offences were committed against a 16 year old young woman from the Lac-Mégantic area in Quebec. His sentence began on April 25, 1996. Yesterday, Mr. Bégin was released after serving his entire sentence.

What does the new government intend to do to ensure that these individuals are better supervised once they are released?

Hon. Jean-Pierre Blackburn (Minister of Labour and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, CPC): Mr. Speaker, obviously this is an important question. Canadians across the country have asked us to take concrete measures against crime and that is what we have done.

Among other things, our government introduced legislation that will ensure heavier consequences on dangerous and high risk offenders at the time they are sentenced.

If Bill C-27 were currently in effect, a person found guilty would see their peace bond extended from 12 months to 24 months. They would have much harsher restrictions and conditions in terms of supervision, and they would be required to get treatment. But for that, we need support from the parties—

* * *

[English]

ARMENIA

The Speaker: Following discussions among representatives of all parties in the House, I understand there is an agreement to commemorate the Armenian genocide.

[Translation]

I call on hon. members to rise to observe a moment of silence.

[A moment of silence observed]

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1505)

[Translation]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

OPPOSITION MOTION—GREENHOUSE GAS REDUCTION TARGETS

The House resumed consideration of the motion and of the amendment.

Mrs. Carole Lavallée (Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I first wish to inform you, very seriously, that I will be splitting my time with the member for Jeanne-Le Ber. I recognize how important it is to give that kind of information since I am now in a position to fully understand that your job is very demanding and that it requires wit and wisdom.

As far as the Bloc Québécois opposition day motion is concerned, I have to say that environmental issues are amongst the most important concerns on the planet. Without a clean and healthy environment, nothing would be possible and nothing would matter anymore. Inspired by the Earth Day celebrations, I had decided to talk about the little things that each of us can do individually. Simple but effective individual actions are often the key to solving major collective problems. I changed my mind though when I received some very disturbing correspondence from a group of students in my riding who expressed concerns regarding their environment.

I am not an expert on the environment. I yield that role to my colleague from Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie. I am the critic for labour. Astonishingly—if I may be permitted an aside—I notice that the Conservative strategy is the same for almost all issues. When their arguments are weak and they do not agree with our proposals, they launch into a fear campaign and they project total disaster. They are not believable in terms of the effects of the anti-scab legislation and the fear campaign against the Kyoto protocol.

However, as I stated earlier, I am sensitive to the concerns of my fellow citizens. The young children in my riding reminded me recently that this Earth was not handed down to us by our ancestors, but is borrowed from our children. Two teachers of the grade five and six classes of the Courtland Park International School in Saint-Bruno, Laura Sollecito and Madeleine Farrah, sent me letters from some 30 students in their school. Those students want me to be aware of their concerns, in particular, oil spills and their effect on the quality of their environment. They also raised other environmental issues.

It is interesting that they took the time to present their ideas and their solutions to their federal member. They obviously went “outside the box” of their normal school assignments. I want to thank their teachers for their initiative and for sending me these letters. In my opinion, the best response to the entreaties of these students who are concerned about oil spills—the best service that I can render them today is to echo their concerns here in this House, in front of the Minister of the Environment and the Conservative, Liberal and New Democratic Party members.

It makes me feel I am doing my work as a member, by acting to represent the residents of my riding and to defend the interests of Quebec and also these young men and women of my riding, by bringing to your attention some extracts from the 30 hand-written letters from these young citizens who are extremely aware of their environment. The intelligence and clarity of vision of these young people is astonishing. They are concerned about the environment, as I said earlier. They have the intelligence to reflect on it, to read, to analyze and develop various situations. They are anxious to find solutions. They are also worried to see the deterioration of the planet. They want to see political leaders intervening to stop that deterioration. They also have the intelligence to alert political leaders to their concerns and to share their thoughts. Some of them clearly call on the government and the Minister of the Environment to take action.

One of the letters I received was especially touching. Young Sara Moreau wrote:

Take the time to consider our future and think of what it will be like.

I will have to tell her that her request has been heard by the member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, if no one else, who is taking the time to consider our future and to think of what it will be like.

I also received a heartfelt plea from Annie Foisy, who wrote:

I would like you to take a look outside and tell me what you see. I see a horrible world filled with one thing: pollution.

These children are just 10 years old. Others are very anxious, sad, worried and concerned. Laura La Rocque wrote to me, and in so doing, wrote to us all:

We may have tornadoes or even hurricanes if we are not careful enough.

● (1510)

Andrew Goill said:

I am writing to you because the earth is dying. There are oil spills every day, which means that every day, we pollute.

Christian Poirier said:

I want to help prevent oil spills because I like nature and oil spills kill wild animals.

Jean-Sébastien Fontaine asked for action:

I am writing because I find it alarming that there is so much pollution and that it is increasing. Also, it seems as though people are not doing anything about this problem.

There is also a personal request from Émilie Rose Fuoco-Lafamme to the Minister of the Environment.

The Minister of the Environment is responsible for the environment, so he should try something before saying that this cannot be stopped.

Now, in response to their requests for action, I am taking action. I am relaying their requests and asking the minister questions. He boasts about representing a new government and claims that he is taking action instead of just talking, so I am asking him to intervene.

Young people in my riding are very candid about asking us to intervene. It is our duty and responsibility to do so. Like 76% of Quebecers, these young people believe that the government must do whatever is necessary to reach the Kyoto protocol targets. The Bloc Québécois has proposed implementing the polluter-pay principle, setting absolute reduction targets that comply with the Kyoto protocol and enabling Quebec and other provinces that wish to do so to adopt a territorial approach.

The Conservative government must realize that, with its partisan politics, it is denying the reality of climate change. What the government is doing is twisting the facts and numbers to make them say what it wants them to say. It is waging a campaign of fear by changing the premises on which the analysis of the situation is made.

For example, why is the government saying that the elimination of one tonne of greenhouse gases costs \$195, when international experts said, in their report to the UN on April 7, 2007, that it would cost between \$25 and \$50 a tonne? Is it because the Conservative government has its base in Alberta that it is always trying to protect oil companies by penalizing them as little as possible and by refusing to admit the harm that oil companies can cause to the environment?

But in the real world, for people and children who are aware of their environment, it is clear that the minister simply must act. I would add that he must stop saying that the previous government did

Business of Supply

nothing. I remind him that the Liberals were too often stopped in their efforts—sometimes rather timid, I must admit—by the fierce actions of the Conservatives who then were the official opposition.

The young people who wrote to me asked what the Bloc Québécois was doing to make the environment better. As I said earlier, their concern began with oil spills. I answered that, in the Bloc Québécois, we were well aware of the problems with oil and thought that one of the ways out was to reduce our dependency on oil through applying six principles.

First, we should become more energy efficient, for example by using less energy to heat our homes. Second, we should promote the use of clean energy like that from water, wind and the sun, instead of oil. We would need to replace trucks by trains and ships, which use less oil and gas. We also need to make it easier to buy hybrid vehicles, which generate less pollution, and to make public transit more accessible. And we should also make sure our gasoline contains less oil products and more biofuels. Finally, we should invent other means of transportation and energies that pollute less, like electric cars.

With these six principles Quebecers would use less oil, they would need to move less petroleum products and thus the risk of spills would be reduced. I would add that these six principles would also help reduce greenhouse gas emissions, which is the subject of the motion before us today.

I should add for their information that the Bloc Québécois brought this debate to the House to make this government change its mind and is suggesting concrete ways to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, improve the environment and impose some discipline on the oil industry.

It is really quite motivating to know that these young people are concerned with the well-being of our planet, and that they are ready to do something personally to make it better. I encourage them very much to keep their interest in their environment—in all meanings of the word—and to demand policies that will change things.

The actions and efforts of the Bloc in this House are far from useless, and they have shown that they are to the point and efficient.

● (1515)

Mr. Christian Ouellet (Brome—Missisquoi, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate my colleague for her very clear and moving plea, which illustrated how alike children are in a world that is forgetting them.

Currently, the selfishness of business and government, that only think about the economy, is a real tragedy. I am aware that children must find this increasingly difficult.

I would like to ask my colleague whether she can relay to these children a fact that I found very interesting. Currently, 30% of the animals on the planet will disappear within a century because of climate changes. Of course, I am not talking about flies or that type of bugs, but about birds and large animals such as mammals.

Business of Supply

In a magazine entitled *Mother Earth*, a museum of animals that will likely disappear has already been created. These are animals that we are familiar with and that we see all the time.

Does my colleague think that it would be interesting for these children to realize how their own environment and animals will soon disappear? Even with changes, some things are already no longer acceptable.

Mrs. Carole Lavallée: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Brome—Missisquoi for his question.

First, I would say that the young people who wrote to me have looked closely into the situation, the degradation of the planet, particularly as a result of oil spills. In addition, they are aware of the climate changes and their effect on the planet. They are very concerned and very troubled. Many children said to me that they are very sad about animals changing, dying or disappearing from their environment.

Above all, we must understand that they are extremely aware of their environment. They also know, to my great surprise, that things can be changed with policies. They are asking us to act.

Today, on this opposition day, the Bloc Québécois is showing its interest in taking action. We are interested in taking action and we believe it is necessary for the government to change tactics. The Conservatives must change tactics and tackle the environmental problems. They must take real action to fight real environmental problems and they must stop pretending that climate changes do not exist.

[*English*]

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal (Newton—North Delta, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the hon. member for Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert on her presentation to the House.

In fact, she was talking to students of 10 and 11 years. I was talking to grade 11 students at Sands Secondary School and they have the same concerns about climate change. They want to take action and in fact they took action. I celebrated Earth Day with the DRS Earthwise Society and people in my riding of Newton—North Delta.

The Conservative government is not getting the point. In fact it is playing politics with the environment and with our future generations. I would request that the member tell the House how the minister could take action. People at the ages of 10 and 11 are asking why the minister is not thinking about our future generations.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Carole Lavallée: Mr. Speaker, I thank the Liberal member for his question. If I understand correctly, he is asking me what concrete measures the Bloc Québécois would suggest that the Conservative government take.

I can only refer him to the Bloc Québécois motion, which asks this House to “call on the government to set absolute greenhouse gas reduction targets as soon as possible so as to meet the objectives of the Kyoto protocol, a prerequisite for the establishment, as expeditiously as possible, of a carbon exchange in Montreal”.

I do not want to repeat everything my colleagues have said about this motion, but I do want to say that it is quite clear. The motion asks the Conservative government to take action, particularly by setting absolute targets and implementing the Kyoto protocol, as 76% of Quebecers want the government to do.

• (1520)

Mr. Thierry St-Cyr (Jeanne-Le Ber, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak to this motion today in this House. To begin, I would like to digress a bit and talk about sugar bushes. You will see why. I am sure you enjoy going to the sugar bush. I love it. And I would like to thank young Félix-Antoine, who, on my last visit to a sugar bush, helped me find my BlackBerry, which I had lost. A member of Parliament feels quite isolated without a BlackBerry. So I want to thank Félix-Antoine, who saved the government money and prevented any pollution that might have resulted.

I am talking about sugar bushes because a few years ago, a battle was waged against acid rain, which required a major effort not only in Canada, but in the United States as well. At the time, we were told that plunging immediately into the fight against acid rain would mean economic disaster. We were told that it was impossible to solve this problem quickly, it was impossible to reduce our acid emissions. Yet we succeeded in making so much progress on this issue that today, the sugar bushes in Quebec and Canada are in much better shape than they were a decade ago.

There was also the fight against chlorofluorocarbons, or CFCs, which caused holes in the ozone layer. We were told at the time—you will guess what—that it would be an economic disaster, that we could not do this kind of transition, that we would never find alternatives and that it made no sense at all. Nevertheless, we have made great progress in that area.

So when the environment minister presented his so-called report, I told myself that it was impossible. I could not believe it. How could he use this old tactic of scaring people by leading them to believe that they will lose their jobs when the opposite is true? In fact, inaction is what threatens our economy more than anything else.

The so-called government report on the impacts of Kyoto was so biased and distorted that there was nobody to support it. I was surprised. I paid close attention to the news wire and I thought that at some point the petroleum producers association would support the government, but I have not seen anything yet. I can only conclude that oil companies are not bothering to support the government on this issue, which proves how isolated the government is and how bogus its study is.

On the contrary, earlier today, during question period, we were wondering if a sensible person could claim that there would be no economic impact following the implementation of the Kyoto protocol. I am convinced that there will be such an impact and I believe it will be positive. I also think that this is another good reason to support the Kyoto protocol. Above and beyond all the environmental considerations and the importance of saving our planet, it is indeed an incredible opportunity for Quebec and for all of Canada to develop economically.

Business of Supply

The economic cost of inaction would be very considerable indeed. Mr. Speaker, I am sure you will recall Mr. Stern's report, which advised the British Prime Minister on issues related to the Kyoto protocol. Mr. Stern might be considered somewhat of an expert in economics, being a former president of the World Bank. Mr. Stern warned that inaction when it comes to Kyoto would cost billions in economic losses. This is the real threat. The United States can certainly attest to this, considering the hurricanes that are becoming increasingly frequent, violent and severe. Obviously, this has a very negative effect on our economy. We are all aware of the changes this could cause in terms of occupancy and cultivation of the land and access to drinking water. Throughout the world, inaction will be extremely costly.

If there is any catastrophic scenario to discuss, it is what will happen to our planet if the Kyoto targets are not met. That is the real catastrophic scenario. It has nothing to do with the economic problems presented by the government.

• (1525)

Above and beyond the costs we would avoid by implementing Kyoto, our industry and our economy would enjoy a competitive advantage by reducing their dependency on petroleum. The oil that companies purchase and must burn, and the gas that people must buy to fuel their cars; these are expenses. This all has a cost. If, as a society, we give ourselves a kick-start and convince ourselves that we have to follow through, and if our government supports our efforts and gives us tools and clear benchmarks, and if the government contributes to the plan, we will then be able to reduce our oil dependency. This would mean lower costs for our businesses, which would then be more productive and could be more competitive on the global market.

If Canada and the United States continue to be the only two countries in the western world to refuse to implement Kyoto and to fail to reach minimum greenhouse gas reduction targets, this would mean that, of all industrialized countries, we would be the ones to consume more and more petroleum for the same units of production. Thus, we would be less and less productive. From an economic standpoint, that is what would be catastrophic.

At a time when markets are globalizing, it is totally incomprehensible that our country would content itself with failing to achieve the Kyoto targets. While the Germans, French and English manufacture vehicles that burn much less fuel than ours and their factories become more and more productive and able to produce ever more with less energy, we will content ourselves with falling productivity in comparison with theirs. That seems completely irrational to me.

The other disadvantage of failing to proceed with our commitments under the Kyoto protocol is all the opportunities we will lose. First, we will not be able to access the market for greenhouse gas emission credits, usually called carbon exchanges. We already have some in Montreal. There is the carbon exchange that the Montreal Stock Exchange wants to create. We are prepared. This is an attractive economic activity, but we will not have access to it because of the government's refusal to adopt absolute targets for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

Companies will be able to purchase these credits when they need them to meet their fixed targets and will also be able to sell credits when they exceed their targets. These credits will increase in value over time. The government says that we are asking it to spend a lot of money to buy these credits. In actual fact, this is an investment because production increases over time and the credits will become increasingly sought after as companies strive to achieve their fixed targets. This is therefore a lost opportunity.

I am concerned about something else as well. People around the world are talking increasingly about levying taxes on imports from countries that fail to comply with Kyoto. Companies here in Quebec and Canada will be relatively less productive than foreign companies in countries that signed the Kyoto protocol because they will not have reduced their dependence on oil as much as companies elsewhere. In addition, when our companies try to export, they will have a tax levied on them because they are from a country that has not complied with Kyoto.

Finally, there is obviously an entire technology market to develop, one that will be constantly growing. People are talking about billions of dollars worldwide. If Canada fails to adopt the targets in the Kyoto protocol now, we will be excluded from this market. People who want to invest will not do so in places where there is no market and no interest in achieving the targets. We absolutely must proceed, therefore, and implement the Kyoto protocol. I have deliberately not mentioned the environmental aspect because my colleagues have already said a lot about it.

It is for basically economic reasons that we must proceed and adopt absolute greenhouse gas reduction targets, and the Kyoto protocol is the minimum.

• (1530)

Anything less would be both an environmental and an economic mistake.

[English]

Mr. Mike Wallace (Burlington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there is only a little difference between what my friend from the Bloc is saying and what we are actually doing. We are saying as soon as possible and what we are actually doing, which might be physically impossible.

I certainly am committed to the objectives of the Kyoto protocol. We on this side of the House wholeheartedly agree that there is an urgent need to reduce greenhouse gases and pollution and we have been working on that. Since the member is on the finance committee, he knows that we put \$4.5 billion in the recent budget to deal with those issues.

My question for the member concerns part the motion in front of us. The motion reads, "as expeditiously as possible, of a carbon exchange in Montreal". The Bloc has been very clear that it is interested in the establishment of a carbon exchange. I am not sure whether it means all government money, all private money, all international or all national, but that is not the issue here.

If the Government of Canada decides to proceed with a carbon exchange, could the member tell me why it needs to be in Montreal? Since we are a national government for the country of Canada, could it be in another part of this country?

Business of Supply

[Translation]

Mr. Thierry St-Cyr: Mr. Speaker, the Montreal Exchange has already signalled its intention to establish a carbon exchange as soon as absolute greenhouse gas reduction targets have been set. Interest is greatest in Quebec. The National Assembly, businesses, labour, all have expressed support for the Kyoto protocol. It seems self-evident to me, especially since Montreal is home to the entire derivatives market.

When day-to-day market capitalization, the stocks exchanged on a daily basis on the trading floor, was moved to Toronto, which remains Canada's top trade exchange, it was agreed between the two trade exchanges that Montreal would look after derivatives. It seems only natural to me that this agreement be honoured and that any new derivative on the market be directed to the Montreal Exchange, with all the other derivatives.

As for the first part, with respect to the so-called action, while the government has been in office for over a year, tangible results have yet to be delivered. It is amazing and rather unusual for a government to use its own incompetence to justify what it does, for a government to come and tell the House that it can do nothing.

The main difference between the Liberals and the Conservatives is that the Conservatives know that they are incompetent. Over the course of 13 years, the Liberals pretended to be doing something, but did nothing. The Conservatives are not doing anything, but at least they realize it. That is better than nothing, but it is not enough for future generations.

[English]

Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my colleague from the Bloc talked very passionately about the need to get off oil and to move society in that direction. However, in Quebec right now an environmental assessment is going on in the development of a liquefied natural gas terminal.

I would like to know whether this imagery of Quebec importing more fossil fuels from the rest of the world fits with his imagery of a Quebec that is moving off oil and becoming more responsible for greenhouse gas emission reductions in this world.

• (1535)

[Translation]

Mr. Thierry St-Cyr: Mr. Speaker, of course, it must be realized that, when we talk about greenhouse gas reductions, we talk about reducing oil consumption and, by extension, oil production.

The hon. member is right when he says that transporting oil is also, in and of itself, a source of greenhouse gas emissions, as is transporting any good, whether it is lettuce, tomatoes, oranges, etc. In this regard, it would be interesting if our society would consider buying more local products, because this would be one way to reduce transport activities and, consequently, greenhouse gas emissions.

Hon. Christian Paradis (Secretary of State (Agriculture), CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the hon. member for Lotbinière—Chutes-de-la-Chaudière.

I am pleased to rise today to reiterate our government's firm and unequivocal commitment to fight climate change and to protect our environment.

Our government shares the concerns of Quebeckers and Canadians regarding the environment and, particularly, the quality of the air that we breathe.

We are taking significant, concrete and realistic measures to reduce harmful air pollutants. These pollutants that we all breathe are a threat to our health, our economy and our quality of life.

We on this side of the House are very upset by the impact of smog on the lives of our fellow Canadians who suffer from respiratory diseases.

We simply do not accept that a child suffering from asthma cannot go outside to play with his friends during those nice summer days, because there is too much smog. The most vulnerable members of our society—our children and the elderly—deserve better.

We are also very concerned by the increase in greenhouse gas emissions. Despite all the nice speeches of the Liberals and of the Bloc Québécois, the fact remains that, from the moment that the previous government signed the Kyoto protocol, greenhouse gas levels have constantly been increasing in Canada.

We all know now—the Liberals knew as soon as the Kyoto protocol was signed—that we will never reach the targets set for Canada. The Liberals accepted the targets without even carrying out an impact study to support them and without taking into account the specific characteristics of our country.

The Liberals knew that the only way to meet the targets would be to buy carbon credits abroad with taxpayers' money.

As for the Bloc, as usual it was powerless to deal with the Liberal negligence. The Bloc members try to justify their powerless existence in Ottawa by shouting. On the issue of climate change, the Bloc knows very well that it will never be able to do anything other than criticize.

For our part, we are not just talking about the need to reduce greenhouse gases, we are taking concrete and effective measures to do just that.

With regard to targets, the Prime Minister and the Minister of the Environment have been very clear. In the near future, our government will propose short-term targets. Canadians and Quebeckers know full well that we are determined to improve our environment.

Since October 2006, we have introduced a multitude of initiatives totalling more than \$9 billion. I am referring to the ecoenergy initiative and the ecotransport strategy. I am also thinking of the ecotrust which will allow Quebec to fulfill its ambitions and to implement its climate change plan.

The Bloc Québécois demanded \$328 million for Quebec, an amount we did not agree with. The Conservative government did not give Quebec the \$328 million demanded by the Bloc Québécois but rather transferred \$350 million. That is a good example of the Bloc's failure to meet Quebec's needs.

Business of Supply

For real results, Quebeckers know that they can count on only one party, the Conservative Party.

I would also like to talk about biofuels. Just yesterday, I announced the ecoAgriculture Biofuels Capital Initiative in Laval. Not only will this initiative help reduce vehicle emissions, but it will also allow farmers to reap the maximum benefits from this new market.

With this initiative, we are guaranteeing a promising future for farmers and regions and at the same time protecting the environment for future generations.

I would also like to spend a few minutes on another very important aspect of the fight against climate change, and that is international cooperation.

No country can tackle climate change on its own. This is a long-term challenge that cannot be met without effective international cooperation. In order for international cooperation on climate change to be effective, it must meet a number of criteria.

First, it must be effective in environmental terms, and lead to the reductions that are needed in order to combat climate change.

Second, it will need broad participation, including the major emitting countries that are not currently committed to reducing emissions. While Canada is the source of about 2% of global greenhouse gas emissions, the United States emits about 20% and the developing countries nearly 50%.

Third, dealing with climate change even though global demand for energy is rising will call for effective development and implementation of clean technologies, both in the developed world and in developing countries.

Fourth, it will have to address the question of adaptation meaningfully.

Fifth, it will have to include flexible measures that will enable countries to meet their commitments to reducing emissions.

And sixth, global action on climate change must recognize a country's internal and unique circumstances.

Upcoming discussions about international cooperation are gaining momentum in many international forums, both inside and outside the United Nations. Canada is actively participating in those discussions.

• (1540)

Our government is very clear: Canada continues to be bound by the principles and objectives in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and by the Kyoto protocol.

The Kyoto protocol offers ways in which all countries can share information about their greenhouse gas emissions and the measures they are taking to deal with them. It also provides a framework to support developing countries as they adapt to the consequences of climate change. The protocol provides the industrialized and developing countries with an opportunity to cooperate, through the Clean Development Mechanism and projects that reduce greenhouse gases.

We accept our international obligations and we will do everything we can in this regard. We are trying to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in a way that is appropriate to Canada's domestic circumstances and that will meet the criteria that apply to international cooperation referred to earlier. We need more cooperation and leadership at the international level and from the major emitting countries.

I am thinking in particular of the G-8 + 5 countries which, in addition to the major developed economies, include economies that are growing in importance, such as China and India.

Discussions regarding the future are going on at the United Nations at present under three separate processes.

The first is the "Dialogue on Long-term Cooperative Action" and is open to all 189 countries, including the United States and China, under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. It was set up to share experiences and examine innovative new future approaches to address climate change.

The Dialogue process is important because it can examine better approaches that will enable all countries to join in cooperative actions on climate change.

The second United Nations discussion process is called the "Ad Hoc Working Group on further commitments for developed countries beyond 2012". Its aim is to consider further commitments under the Kyoto protocol.

Discussions in the working group should be broad enough to allow for consideration of alternative approaches to international cooperation. They will also allow for consideration of opportunities for countries that do not have targets under the Kyoto protocol to participate in the future. In 2000, the group of countries that met the current Kyoto targets accounted for only 28% of global emissions.

The third United Nations process is a review of the effectiveness of the Kyoto protocol, as article 9 requires.

Based on the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto protocol, a number of other supplementary initiatives have been created to fight climate change.

Canada actively participates in the Gleneagles Dialogue on Climate Change, Clean Energy, and Sustainable Development and other G-8 discussions on climate change. The Gleneagles dialogue brings together the top 20 energy users to discuss the challenges related to climate change, clean energy and sustainable development.

Canada also participates in a certain number of technology cooperation and partnership initiatives, namely the Methane to Markets partnership, the Carbon sequestration leadership forum, the International Partnership for the Hydrogen Economy, and the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Partnership.

Taking part in these initiatives allows Canada to make progress on implementing Canadian technologies in developing countries.

In addition to the UN efforts, Canada is actively exploring ways to join the Asia-Pacific Partnership on Clean Development and Climate Change.

Business of Supply

The Asia-Pacific Partnership is a voluntary initiative that addresses challenges related to sustainable development, clean energy and climate change. It addresses these issues by developing, deploying and transferring clean, efficient technology, free of risks of climate change.

We participate in all these discussions to promote our points of view and to help guide the process. In our opinion, we should examine how governments and the private sector could work together to stimulate technological innovation and move the world consistently toward a low carbon economy.

Countries from around the world should share experiences and discuss what can be done well within the convention process. Market based approaches will continue to be important.

The international community should continue to engage with corporations, multilateral development banks, and export credit agencies. Canada is looking closely at existing carbon exchange mechanisms and our approach will be based on the pros and cons observed.

Major progress has been made on the issue of adaptation in the UN process, but there is still a long way to go.

The Government of Canada supports the importance of an open information exchange between the processes, whether within the UN framework or outside it.

• (1545)

Mr. Christian Ouellet (Brome—Missisquoi, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to tell my hon. colleague from Mégantic—L'Érable that I find it rather strange that he is talking about people who shout here, when the person who always shouts the loudest among the wolves is the Minister of the Environment. He yells the loudest. Thus, I did not understand the allusion made by the hon. member regarding people who yell on this side of the House. In our view, it is the members opposite who shout the loudest.

Nor did I understand why they say they have done so many things, when we feel that they have not achieved anything in the past year and a half, apart from eliminating programs and reinstating them under new names. Thus, someone will have to explain to me what they have actually done during this time. I would also like to point out to the hon. member for Mégantic—L'Érable that, if the Bloc were not here at this time, the member would also be elsewhere, namely, on an election campaign. In other words, we have our place here.

I would like the hon. member to explain something. How can he say that the money that would be used to pay for carbon exchanges would come from people, from the population, when we all know very well that this is a private sector matter? The stock exchange is always paid for by private enterprise and not by the people. Thus, I would like him to explain, clearly and explicitly, how this money would come from the people?

Hon. Christian Paradis: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Brome—Missisquoi for his question. I had the pleasure of sitting with him on the Standing Committee on Natural Resources, which I miss by the way.

We must go much further than the idle talk of the Bloc and the Liberals. There was no action on this issue for 13 years. It is important to understand, and I have a good quote to show it, that the Bloc's rhetoric on this issue, as on all the others, will never be worth more than the paper it is written on. Although, for this to be true, the paper would probably have to be discounted. What I mean is that it is always all talk and no action.

Now there are initiatives. Nine billion dollars have been announced since October 2006. There will be targets that will place limits on all the sectors and all of industry. This has never been seen before, and my colleague knows that.

[*English*]

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in budget 2005 a climate emissions reductions agency was established with a mandate to stimulate cost effective reduction in greenhouse gas emissions in Canada, and part of it was to establish a carbon trade system and set up an exchange for GHGs.

The Conservative government scrapped this program altogether, in addition to a number of other initiatives. The member said that in 13 years we did nothing. How can he justify such a statement when everything that was done by the Liberal government was cancelled by the Conservative government?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Christian Paradis: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

All the initiatives taken by the Liberals were a clear step backwards, since we are now 35% over the projected emissions. It is clear why we cancelled them. The question is obvious, and to ask the question is to answer it.

Nine billion dollars have been announced for ecoenergy and other initiatives. Just yesterday we announced a \$200 million fund to help set up biofuel plants. This has never been seen before because it is something tangible. It is not hot air, not botched plans like we saw for 13 years. It does not make sense to sign a protocol without knowing where we are headed. Of course we are presenting a targeted program. We have to play catch up, as the minister said. He is very committed to implementing it and he will give it his all because we have to catch up and we want things to work.

• (1550)

[*English*]

Mr. Mike Wallace (Burlington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member did not quite finish his speech. He was going to talk about the exchange, I believe, and I want to give him an opportunity to tell me what he was going to say about that.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Christian Paradis: Mr. Speaker, I was saying in my speech that the minister is currently studying the kind of trading that is taking place. We want to see what has been positive and where there has been problems. The clock is ticking. We want the plan to be implemented in a logical fashion within a coherent and effective system.

Business of Supply

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to take part in this debate on greenhouse gas emissions and on the measures taken by the Government of Canada to reduce these emissions and to improve air quality in our country.

Energy and the production of energy have always been a pillar of development in our country. It is part of the reality of our geography, our lifestyle and our economy. We rely on energy for almost everything we do. It is an issue and a challenge that was ignored for too long under the previous government.

We had to act and that is exactly what the new Government of Canada did. We went beyond the Liberal rhetoric on the environment and took drastic measures. After 13 long years of inaction and increasing greenhouse gas emissions under the Liberal government, we have come to the point where we are taking action to reduce emissions through decisive measures.

In January of this year, the Minister of Natural Resources announced the Government of Canada's ecoENERGY Initiatives. These initiatives, which will be funded to the tune of \$2 billion, are part of the government's integrated approach to reduce air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions.

The ecoenergy efficiency initiatives are threefold: the ecoenergy efficiency initiative, an investment of \$340 million aimed at promoting more intelligent use of energy; the ecoenergy technology initiative, an investment of \$200 million for energy sciences and technology; and the ecoenergy renewable initiative, an investment of \$1.5 billion designed to increase the supply of renewable energy in Canada.

Together, these initiatives help to provide support for research and the development of ways of cleaning up our traditional energy sources, for implementation of solutions for reducing the demand for energy, and for greater use of clean, renewable energy to meet the country's energy consumption needs.

I wish to assure the House that these initiatives are not simply plans on paper. We have taken concrete action. We have rolled up our sleeves and got down to work.

At the beginning of the month, we announced the details of the Government of Canada's ecoenergy retrofit initiative. By providing grants of up to \$5,000, this program really encourages Canadians to retrofit their houses in order to make them more energy efficient. Furthermore, out of every program dollar, 90¢ will go directly towards renovations.

Under the ecoenergy retrofit initiative, 35,000 homeowners will receive grants. This is many more than the average of 25,000 owners under the old program. Also, since 90¢ out of every dollar will go directly to renovations, the average grant given to owners will be close to \$1,110, instead of the \$800 under the old program. A larger proportion of the money will go directly to homeowners rather than program administration.

Small- and medium-sized businesses, institutions and industrial organizations will also be able to take advantage of this program with grants of up to \$50,000 designed to offset the cost of renovations made to increase energy efficiency.

Obviously this is progress not only for home and business owners, but for all Canadians. Houses and buildings are responsible for close to 30% of greenhouse gas emissions. We are all winners when they become more energy efficient.

Given our determination to really limit greenhouse gas emissions, we are investing not only in incentives to promote energy-efficient renovations, but also in the ecoenergy for renewable power program, which will increase the supply of clean electricity from renewable sources, such as wind, biomass and low-impact hydroelectricity, by 4,000 megawatts. This should be enough to supply about one million homes.

• (1555)

We will also invest over \$35 million in the ecoENERGY for Renewable Heat program for homes and businesses. This funding will help switching to renewable energy technologies for space heating and cooling, and also for water heating.

We have also taken important measures in research and technology. As I already mentioned, under our ecoENERGY initiative for technology, \$200 million will be allocated to energy science and technology. This program will also be supported by a number of initiatives mentioned in the 2007 budget, including a \$500 million investment in Sustainable Development Technology Canada.

I will give an example of government science and technology at work. NRCan scientists have developed an entirely new approach in commercial refrigeration by working in cooperation with Loblaw's and other partners in Repentigny, Quebec, and in Ottawa, Ontario. They showed how their system works. This system could revolutionize the quick frozen food section in groceries, with a 75% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions and a 30% reduction in energy use.

As we all know, it is not just using energy, but also producing it that contributes to the creation of environmental waste. This is why managing waste and tar sand residues is a major environmental issue. Natural Resources Canada has teamed up with the industry, the University of Alberta and the Government of Alberta to create a new research facility on tar sand residues. Its objective is to find new solutions to manage this environmental waste.

Here is another example of measures taken under the ecoENERGY program: Shell Canada is using the innovative froth treatment technology developed by CTEC in Devon, for its \$1 billion oil sands production. The company was able to go directly from a laboratory demonstration project to a fully operational production facility at the Fort McMurray tar sands complex.

Our ecoENERGY initiatives provide concrete solutions. As the Minister of Natural Resources said:

Canada is an emerging energy superpower, but energy production and use are the source of most of our air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions. Our challenge is to be a clean energy superpower and our ecoENERGY Initiatives are designed to meet this challenge.

Business of Supply

We are meeting this challenge and we are striving to honour the environmental commitments we made. We are taking the necessary action and working seriously. We urge Canadians to participate in our programs. Through these initiatives, government, businesses, universities and all Canadians can make Canada a leader in energy efficiency.

• (1600)

[English]

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in the budget is a feebate program for high efficiency automobiles. The member probably is aware that one company, Toyota, gets over \$45 million, or three-quarters of all these rebates, on one of its models, the Yaris, which is an entry level car.

It is interesting to note that the Yaris is a conventional gas automobile. It does not include any of the new technologies that would help to provide a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. In fact, the only way the Yaris can get so much is because it does not have the safety features of other comparable entry level cars, which includes air bags, steel reinforcement, et cetera.

This is a disproportionate benefit to one company. It will hurt the other producers of entry level cars because the \$1,000 rebate is more than the dealer can make on the sale of a comparable car.

Why has the Conservative government decided to allow an imported automobile to get so much of the rebate program for totally the wrong purposes?

[Translation]

Mr. Jacques Gourde: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

He has brought up a very interesting point. If all Canadians used a low fuel consumption vehicle, we would decrease greenhouse gas emissions overall, and it would be very good for all of Canada.

I thank my colleague for putting forward this idea, and I hope that all Canadians will take this initiative in the near future.

[English]

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to my colleague's dissertation. I have heard many of them from the Conservative Party.

It seems to me that some people are leaders in history, some people are led by history and others are dragged kicking and screaming by it, which seems to be the policy position of the Conservative Party right now.

When we saw the Conservative-Reform Party initially it said that there was no such thing as greenhouse gases. This was, in the words of the Prime Minister, a "socialist" plot to suck money out of Alberta.

Then we saw the Conservative-Reform Party became the home of every flat earth theory going on the environment. It was sunspots. It was El Niño. It was the flatulence of the dinosaurs that changed the heat in the last millennium.

Then, in this new Parliament, we have a minister who has said that if we do anything we will shut down every plane, train and automobile and turn out all the lights, so we cannot do anything.

That did not work either.

Then the Conservatives had Bill C-30, although that has been shelved. Now they are telling us not to worry. They are telling us that they will actually do something but we have to give them more time.

I am wondering when they are actually going to get serious, just stop protecting the oil patch and get down to doing what Canadians are asking for, which is to take action on greenhouse gases now.

[Translation]

Mr. Jacques Gourde: Mr. Speaker, I find my colleague's question very interesting. In the history of Canada, each time there have been major initiatives, or big changes that have been sources of pride for our country, they have come under a Conservative government. The next big initiative we must launch is the environmental one.

I can assure the House that this new task is very important to our government and to all my colleagues, and, unlike all the other parties, we will succeed in bringing about a healthy environment with a strong economy, within a better Canada.

Mr. Christian Ouellet (Brome—Missisquoi, BQ): Mr. Speaker, am surprised to hear the hon. member for Lotbinière—Chutes-de-la-Chaudière discuss all the various ecoENERGY initiatives, but not the motion brought before the House today. I thought that he was rising to speak on the motion, but that is not what he did.

Nevertheless, to use his diversion topic, since he did not stick to the motion, how does the hon. member explain that the new program, which is basically the old ecoENERGY program with improvements, will put 90¢ out of every dollar toward retrofit, while 10¢ goes to administration anyway and that another 40¢ has to be spent on pre- and post-retrofit assessments? Where will he find the money to pay for assessing the work that has been done and the work that remains to be done?

Mr. Jacques Gourde: Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague's question is very valid.

In our new program, the initial and final work assessments will be at the owners' expense. We want the maximum amount, or 90¢ out of every dollar, to go directly to owners, as opposed to 60¢ or 65¢ under the previous government.

• (1605)

Mr. Paul Crête (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Berthier—Maskinongé.

I would like to begin by congratulating the hon. member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie for bringing this very important motion before the House for debate. It is very important not just for the moment, or for the year to come, but for all the generations yet to come. Let us think about where we have come from as far as the environment is concerned.

Business of Supply

Some twenty years ago, a few ecologists were sounding the alarm, but they were heeded by very few. With time, we have come to realize that they were right. In recent months we have had definitive confirmation that there is a major scientific problem. Even the Conservative government has been forced to admit it to some extent. The Minister of the Environment claimed to be surprised at these findings when they were announced at the international conference he was attending. Now one would expect some action from the government. The Bloc can take pride in its motion today, because it is acting as the true messenger for Quebeckers on this issue.

Quebeckers decided to take the green path a long time ago. They took concrete actions and have a noteworthy record of accomplishments in this area. Now, however, environmental action must be global if results are to be achieved. One of the worst threats to this is the immobility of governments that are unwilling to move forward and overly sensitive to pressure from lobbies such as the oil patch.

Returning to the motion presented, it reads: That the House—and therefore all the representatives of the population who are here—call on the government to set absolute greenhouse gas reduction targets as soon as possible—

What are the greenhouse gases? Six of them are covered by Kyoto. They include: CO₂, the result of the combustion of fossil fuels and of deforestation—petroleum, among other things, is a fossil fuel; methane, which is produced by cattle farming, rice cultivation, domestic waste landfills, and oil and gas operations; nitrous oxide comes from nitrogen fertilizer use as well as certain chemical processes. Pollution created by human beings leads to major changes to the living conditions on this planet.

This has been recognized on a global scale. Only a few countries are still denying this reality. Unfortunately, Canada, which should be at the forefront in several areas, has a retrograde attitude right now that is doing a lot of damage, including to the environment. Most members here have children or grandchildren. They should be very aware of the fact that this is not a short-term partisan decision; it is a decision that will have an impact on every aspect of these people's lives.

On the government side, a lot of energy is being invested into the military to buy equipment and to go to Afghanistan to solve the problems there. If we invested in the environment only a small fraction of the energy invested in the military, not one single member would vote against this motion today. Everybody would support it. It is just as urgent as the issue of world peace and security.

The motion is asking the House to call on the government to set absolute targets. What does that mean? When we have a problem with energy consumption, we can decide to take off a percentage; for example, we can impose a 10% reduction from the current level. That does not take account of future increases in expenditures. In that case, we will not achieve the desired result. We can convince ourselves that we did our best and tell ourselves, in 10 years, that we have met our targets. However, we will not have met them because of the increase in consumption.

This is not a strictly partisan issue that has its pros and cons. The real impact is that our planet will be even sicker if we do not take action, if the Conservative government does not do its share of the

work and does not support the measures that all Quebeckers and Canadians are calling for. A vast majority of the population wants us to shoulder our responsibilities. It wants us to move forward, to make proposals like the one before us today and to get tangible results.

I am certain that there is a consensus among the population that is calling on politicians to make adjustments. The problem has been identified. It has been brought forward and concrete steps can be taken. People are waiting for politicians to take those steps and that is what the Bloc Québécois is doing today by presenting this motion. We look for generous support from this House for this motion not only because it is a good idea for the next week, but because it is an essential approach for the future of our planet and of our children. In addition, we have finally succeeded in making a link between the environment and economic development. That is one of the problems of this government.

● (1610)

The Prime Minister continues to make a distinction between economic development and environmental quality of life. According to him, these are two separate things but for sustainable development they must be united. We can no longer move forward with economic development without considering the effects on the environment. We must ensure that our development takes both realities into account, which is something that has been done in the past.

The facts are there before us. The results of not taking both realities into account are clear to see. Perhaps, we were not sufficiently aware, perhaps, we did not have the necessary scientific tools, but today we have them and we can achieve significant results.

It is very paradoxical. This Conservative government—which claims to be close to business and economic leaders—increasingly closes its eyes to the fantastic benefits that could result from creating as soon as possible a carbon exchange in Montreal. In fact, a carbon exchange market would stimulate economic activity in a context of sustainable development. That would make it possible to recognize the special effort made by part of the country, or by the whole country and to reward those who have chosen to invest in the environment with a return on their investment.

For example, if we invested in polluting industries, it would be perfectly normal to have to pay the price; and if we invested in a better quality of the environment, that should pay us a return.

This is not a pious wish. It is what is contained in the agreements. It is what people want to see implemented, and it already exists in Europe. At present, we have our world upside down. Economic groups in Quebec are calling on the Conservative government to press ahead with this measure. Yet, the government is still not moving.

I invite the Prime Minister and the Conservatives to put aside their ideological approach and to recognize, as everyone else does, that this is a major problem. It is perhaps the most important problem in the world today. We have a responsibility. Canadian action alone will not solve this issue. Action is needed everywhere in the world.

Some 40 or 50 years ago, Mr. Pearson came up with a new idea for providing assistance in peaceful military operations. Today, we need this kind of new thinking for the environment.

Business of Supply

If someone were to go into a classroom in Quebec or Canada and ask youngsters six, seven, eight or ten years old what is important to them and what they want from their elected officials and politicians insofar as the environment is concerned, the answer will assuredly be what is in the motion. They may not use the same words, but the end result would be. The Kyoto protocol is a bit of a warm-up to help us tackle the problem and deal with it. So far, the government has refused to admit there is a problem. We need to advance to the next stage as soon as possible. We need to make progress and set things up. If we fail, history will be our judge. It will view us as those who failed to take action in time. That is the challenge the people want their elected officials to tackle. We only need to look at the poll results: people are very concerned about the environment.

There is a feeling now that the government is not making any progress. People are trying to find the reasons and the causes. One would think that a minority government would be particularly sensitive. However, the reality about the environment is clearly very different from one end of Canada to the other.

Quebec has done its part and succeeded in ensuring that its increase in greenhouse gases is much less. It also developed its hydroelectricity, which helps a lot. However, other people and groups in Canada developed different resources that are highly polluting. They need to find a solution. And it is not maximum development with an eye to making as much money as possible with no consideration for the environment.

The provinces or parts of Canada that invested in a quality environment should not have to pay the price for years on end. That is the purpose of this motion.

When members rise to vote in the House, they should think of their children and grandchildren and think of the message they will be sending to history if they refuse to recognize the need to comply with the Kyoto protocol. We need to move so that in 20 years time people remember that we got the job done and achieved results that improved the environment for the entire planet.

•(1615)

[English]

Mr. Laurie Hawn (Edmonton Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, before I ask my hon. friend a question, I would like to point out that on my last trip to Victoria, being the environmentally conscientious person I am, I did rent a Toyota Yaris and it had an air bag, as opposed to the windbags we find in other places. I am not talking about my friend from the Bloc because he raised some very interesting points. We do agree that there is a problem and something needs to be done.

He talked about economic development taking into account environmental impacts. That is obviously very important, but he stretched it to the point where there is perhaps a lack of balance.

When we look at things we are doing for the environment which are necessary, should we also be taking into account the impact it is going to have on the economy? Should there be a bit of a balance there of some kind, or is the environmental impact the only thing that matters, regardless of the economic impact on his way of life, my children's way of life and my grandchildren's way of life?

[Translation]

Mr. Paul Crête: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

This is exactly when it becomes important. We are in a situation where economic and environmental benefits converge, if we can only go forward with the idea of a carbon exchange. There are people who, initially, were not really front-line environmentalists. Corporations like Alcan and other businesses throughout Quebec told the Minister of the Environment that they were disappointed with his plan and wanted him to go forward with more measures. We must not separate the economy and the environment. We must have sustainable development. Sustainable development is done in an environmentally desirable way over the long term. Some important findings have been made clear here today. Very important tax benefits were provided to develop the tar sands, for example. Next year, this tax expenditure will cost the government about \$300 million. On the other side, we need to find a way to make sure this money is used wisely. We should have strings attached and make sure there is a market so that those who pollute less get the benefits and those who pollute more pay the price.

With the present approach of the Conservative government, we will not be able to meet the goals we want to reach and the goals we need to reach for the future of this planet, for the future of Quebec, and the future of Canada.

[English]

Mr. Mark Warawa (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for his zeal. I just want to get us back on the topic, which is the motion which states:

That the House call on the government to set fixed greenhouse gas reduction targets as soon as possible so as to meet the objectives of the Kyoto Protocol, a prerequisite for the establishment, as expeditiously as possible, of a carbon exchange in Montréal.

We agree with that.

The emissions in Canada are 35% above Kyoto targets. We have heard from the Liberal members that they were just about ready to do something before they got kicked out. For 13 years they were just about ready to do something. What we have heard from them is they support a \$100 billion tax increase to Canadians and the industry.

Does the member support that? Does he support the Liberal plan to send billions of dollars outside of Canada to buy hot air credits?

[Translation]

Mr. Paul Crête: Mr. Speaker, we must use all the tools set out in the Kyoto protocol to attain the desired results. We must guarantee results but what is needed first is the political will on the part of the government to move forward. I repeat, if the political will of the current government to act on environmental matters were as strong as its will to fight in Afghanistan, fear not, we would find the money to reach that target. However, the quality of life of here at home for Quebecers and Canadians is just as important and it is vital that we move in that direction.

Business of Supply

An extraordinary tool, the carbon exchange, has been devised to ensure that we have an economic interest in achieving these targets.

I am very pleased that my colleague has said he agrees with the wording of the motion. I hope, I truly hope, that he will vote in favour of it so that we will have a clear indication of intent. I hope that the government will vote in favour of this motion. Then we shall see if we can meet the expectations of our people.

•(1620)

Mr. Guy André (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to speak on this Bloc Québécois opposition day. There are two important components to our motion today.

The aim of the first is to apply the principle of polluter pays by establishing absolute greenhouse gas reduction targets in keeping with the objectives of the Kyoto protocol while allowing Quebec and the provinces that so desire to take a territorial approach. The second component of our motion calls on the federal government to establish a carbon exchange as soon as possible, in Montreal.

However, as our motion indicates, no carbon exchange can be created without absolute greenhouse gas reduction targets. The extent of the reduction is clear. What we in the Bloc want and the Quebec National Assembly unanimously wants is a 6% reduction based on the year 1990.

The matter we are discussing today concerns doubtless one of the greatest challenges facing our planet and the men, women and children living on this earth. I refer obviously to climate change resulting from greenhouse gases.

Global warming has been confirmed by many scientific reports, including those of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change drafted by over 600 climatologists. There is no longer any dissension in the scientific community. The only disagreement is what we meet here in the House, coming from the Conservative Party.

Human activity and, more particularly, the greenhouse gases it produces are the primary cause of global warming. Thus, with the scientific studies confirming and now identifying the devastating effects of global warming, it becomes clear that investing in the fight against climate change is essential in both human and economic terms. It is absolutely vital that this government, in this House, take swift action in this regard.

The recent report by the former chief economist of the World Bank recommended that each country invest—right now—up to 1% of its GDP in fighting climate deregulation, in order to avoid future economic losses of up to 20% more than the current cost of reversing the trend caused by greenhouse gases. So there are savings to be made now, and they are vital. They are savings in both financial and human terms.

In response to this recommendation, the government last week presented a study aimed not only at discrediting the Kyoto protocol—defended by the principal political and economic players in Quebec—but also to ensure the implementation of the Conservative government's political agenda. It is closely tied to the interests and needs of the rich petroleum companies in the West.

This so-called study, presented by the Minister of the Environment, is both irresponsible and biased because it gives no

consideration whatsoever to the consequences of failing to honour the Kyoto protocol.

•(1625)

The cost must be reckoned not only in billions of dollars, but also in loss of biodiversity, millions of refugees and more frequent extreme weather events. The IPCC's latest report, released in February 2007, indicated that other consequences include more frequent droughts, torrential rains, rising sea levels, more frequent heat waves and violent cyclones. We are already seeing this in many places around the world.

In addition to ignoring the consequences of failing to comply with the Kyoto protocol, the Conservative government's study ignores the establishment of a carbon exchange that costs less and allows more flexibility for businesses. This is the option the European Union chose to fight climate change because this system will enable the EU to achieve the Kyoto targets at a cost of less than 0.1% of its GDP.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Guy André: Mr. Speaker, it is clear what the Conservatives think of the Kyoto protocol.

Although many European countries have decided to take meaningful action against greenhouse gases and are in a position to achieve the Kyoto protocol targets, Canada has not yet come up with a precise, detailed plan. There have been delays and doubts, and while some energy targets and programs to reduce energy consumption and save energy have been implemented, nobody wants to implement the protocol. They just want to protect oil companies in Alberta.

Both the Liberals and the Conservatives have refused to take concrete, decisive action for more than five years now. As if this awful mess were not enough, the Conservative government has the nerve to submit a biased report that I would describe as fearmongering, whose only goal is to discredit Kyoto and protect western oil companies who are largely responsible for Canada's rising greenhouse gas emissions.

Clearly, the government does not want to enforce the polluter-pay principle because it would rather protect its friends, the oil companies. It is unfortunate that our Conservative allies from Quebec chose not to vigorously defend the unanimous decisions concerning Kyoto made by the people of Quebec. As we know, Quebec has implemented a greenhouse gas reduction program among the best in Canada. These Quebecers who have been elected under the Conservative Party banner are not representing in any way the interests of their fellow Quebecers, as evidenced by the fact that they are not standing up for Kyoto. Does that really come as a surprise? We will recall that, back in 2002, the current Prime Minister called the Kyoto protocol a socialist scheme and said that implementing it would cripple the oil and gas industry.

Business of Supply

Enough. Like millions of Quebeckers and Canadians, we reject this campaign of fear orchestrated by this Conservative government. The reason why we presented this motion is because implementing the Kyoto protocol is obviously a necessity for humanity. We also believe that implementing Kyoto would give Quebec a decisive economic advantage. Oil and gas, and petroleum products in particular, are responsible for the vast majority of greenhouse gas emissions in Quebec and Canada.

Petroleum makes Quebec poorer, and it will keep making us poorer and poorer as prices continue to rise in the future. In 2006, Canada's crude oil and natural gas exports totalled more than \$70 billion. That is an 80% increase since 2001.

• (1630)

Every increase in the consumption and price of oil enriches Canada and improves its trade balance. In Quebec, quite the opposite holds true.

It is important to remember that the increase in oil prices was enough to send Quebec into a trade deficit.

Therefore we believe that it is urgent for Quebec to drastically reduce its dependency on oil in order to stimulate our economy and to fight climate change.

Respecting the Kyoto protocol by imposing absolute targets and creating a carbon exchange will be powerful incentives for attaining this objective.

[English]

Mr. Mike Wallace (Burlington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is hard to sit here and listen to the fearmongering and so on.

The Minister of the Environment, through the private member's bill presented by the Liberals, was asked what the cost would be of meeting our Kyoto targets immediately. He did exactly what he was asked to do. They may not like the answer but the fact is that it actually will have some economic cost. It was not just done by the economists within the government departments. It was also reviewed and verified by independent economists.

We knew that if the bill were to become law that there would be devastating economic issues to be dealt with. However, that does not mean that we do not believe we should deal with our Kyoto targets and that we do not believe that something needs to be done about greenhouse gases.

We have been working on that. We can look at ecotrusts, ecotransport, ecoenergy and what we did on the transit system. We put \$4.5 billion in the budget that, hopefully, the House will pass. We have been spending money and putting programs together to actually take action.

In the next number of weeks, the minister will be announcing the hard targets that we are expecting. We have been moving on this side of the House and we have been taking action. For members to pretend that we are not and to say that we are fearmongering, I must say that being honest with Canadians is not fearmongering. I think Canadians expect an approach that is appropriate from their government.

If there is a carbon exchange, would the member still support it if it were not in Montreal?

[Translation]

Mr. Guy André: Mr. Speaker, first of all, in terms of the economy, I believe that the hon. member is just as knowledgeable about it as we are. He has read the report by Mr. Stern, formerly of the World Bank, who said that if every country invested 1% of GDP to decrease greenhouse gases, we would realize savings in the short term as opposed to incurring much higher costs—20 times higher—that we would have to pay in future.

I believe we will have to invest \$7.5 billion if we do not take immediate action to decrease greenhouse gases. Future generations and our economy as a whole will be affected. In addition to the impact on the economy, there will be the human cost. There will be many deaths. There will be loss of life among our children. Populations will be displaced because of inaction.

In reply to my colleague's question, the current proposal states that the exchange will be established in Montreal. Why not in Montreal? We are masters of—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Andrew Scheer): The hon. member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie.

Mr. Bernard Bigras (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I listened to my colleague opposite who questioned the Bloc Québécois member, and who continues, despite everything, to engage in fearmongering with respect to the costs of implementing Kyoto.

What we find regrettable here in this House is that the government has not included all the costs associated with inaction.

If the government had gone to the trouble of including the health costs associated with inaction, if it had considered the environmental costs, it would know that the basic premises of this study and this economic analysis are biased, far-fetched and based on unacceptable apocalyptic scenarios.

Instead of developing a strategy and campaign of fear to oppose those who support Kyoto, could the government not have developed a climate change strategy aimed at respecting the Kyoto protocol? The government has wasted the time of this House with its inaction.

• (1635)

Mr. Guy André: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague, the member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, for his excellent question.

I think there are possibilities. Instead of reacting to the greenhouse gas phenomenon and denying that greenhouse gas reduction is a priority, we should act in the interest of the Kyoto protocol. We should be more proactive. We should go ahead with new technologies to move towards green energy sources.

In Quebec, we have developed wind energy. We can export other forms of technology throughout the world, because the whole planet will be facing the same problems. We could be more proactive and respond to this situation.

*Business of Supply**[English]*

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Andrew Scheer): It is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 38 to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Thunder Bay—Rainy River, Agriculture and Agri-food; the hon. member for Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, Manufacturing Industry.

Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to speak to this issue today. The need for action on climate change is now, which is why the New Democratic Party will support this motion that reads:

That the House call on the government to set fixed greenhouse gas reduction targets as soon as possible so as to meet the objectives of the Kyoto protocol, a prerequisite for the establishment, as expeditiously as possible, of a carbon exchange in Montreal.

This is a good motion and it does not preclude the free enterprise system in developing other carbon exchanges in this country. Interest has been expressed by other cities to have similar things. We may find, as time goes on, that these systems could be developed in a way that would be uniquely Canadian and may include other locations in the country. I know Winnipeg is interested. The motion does not tie our hands in this regard but does push forward with the need to set the targets for achieving Kyoto.

We have worked diligently in committee on Bill C-30 over the past six months in, what I have always considered, a nation-building exercise. We put the ideas from all the parties together and created Bill C-30, a bill that represents the majority view in the House of Commons. It represents a building of a consensus toward an issue that can only be solved through consensus, through the support of all parties, through the recognition that we are working for the betterment of Canada and the world, and that partisan political differences must be cast aside.

Last week the environment minister tried to scare Canadians from taking the needed action on climate change when he painted his doom and gloom scenario before members of the Senate. That, of course, raised everyone's hackles. Let us look at how realistic his nightmare on green street is.

He said that meeting Canada's greenhouse gas commitments would take a quarter of a million jobs out of the economy. This level of job loss in Canada, according to the minister, would result in economic chaos for Canada. How can he say this when the job loss from the North American Free Trade Agreement resulted in more than four times the number of Canadians who had lost jobs?

According to the Conservatives, NAFTA is good for Canada. Where was their concerns about job losses when the result was greater profit for their business pals? Where was the chaos in the Canadian economy? People worked, they recovered from the job losses and they moved ahead.

An hon. member: But there were job losses.

Mr. Dennis Bevington: Some jobs will be lost in transit to an environmentally sustainable economy but many more will be created. However, even more than Canadians losing their jobs, they will lose their future and their grandchildren's future if we lose the

intrinsic nature of the stability of our climate and our environment by doing nothing.

The environment minister claims that the cost of electricity will rise by 50%. I guess the minister does not realize just how many other opportunities there are for electricity across the country. Generating electricity with fossil fuels and with oil and coal has, if properly computed, more expensive results than many other forms of energy.

Having hard targets for greenhouse gas reduction will force investments into much more clean, useful, sustainable and long term forms of energy generation. It will improve the use of fossil fuels in terms of cogeneration. It will make a difference to Canada in wind power, hydro, solar, biomass, all those things. It will move them ahead as they can be moved ahead and as they have the opportunity to move ahead.

● (1640)

We were in a natural resources committee meeting last week and we heard people from the wind power sector say that we had the ability of 100,000 megawatts within the existing transmission system in Canada. We have that resource available to us. Solar energy is available everywhere in the country. As we use it, as we increase the volume of it, the price will come down and the long term impact on our economy will be very positive. Then we can talk about conservation in the short term.

I heard the member for Fort McMurray—Athabasca, in the Bill C-30 committee, say that he had a geographically challenged area in the country for energy. He said that people had to travel long distances and that they had to use lots of energy to heat and light their homes. Interestingly enough, we did that before 1990 as well. Before 1990, we were a very large energy user. Therefore, in comparison, when we talk about Kyoto, we talk about the reduction of energy in our homes and about the reduction in our transportation system. It is relative to 1990 where we did much the same as we do now.

Canadians are large energy users. Energy was cheap for many years. We use a lot of it. We have great opportunities. The least costly electrical energy right now is the megawatt. The reduction in use of that source of energy will not cost 50% more; it will cost 50% less for the consumer.

The energy minister said that the price of gasoline would rise by more than 60%. Over the last five years, we have seen the price of gasoline go up and down like a yo-yo. That has not stopped our economy. That has not stopped people from getting to and from work. Again, he assumes that average Canadians will not move to cars which use less gasoline or other fuels or increase their use of public transit if the price of gasoline goes up.

Business of Supply

The minister must believe that no one will use the measures announced in the recent budget and last year's budget. I am sure the minister is familiar with the law of supply and demand. When the demand goes down, the cost of the supply will go down as well. As Canadians use less and less gasoline, demand will drop, resulting in a levelling of prices or a drop.

The minister wants to scare us into believing that a doubling of natural gas prices will throw the economy into a tailspin. In the last decade the price of natural gas has gone from \$2 a gigajoule up to \$8. That is a quadrupling of the price of natural gas in Canada. Has the Canadian economy suffered? Has it fallen into chaos? No, it has not. Canadians are extremely adaptable. Our industries are adaptable. They make the moves that are necessary to accommodate increased energy costs, and they have done that.

If the Canadian economy can grow when natural gas prices continue to climb, doubling in price, according to this incredible assumption of \$195 a tonne for carbon tax, which we have to take because the minister has given it to us, the economy will not stop. The economy will continue to grow. We will continue to heat our homes. We may move to other forms of energy, whether it is biomass pellets, or geothermal or solar energy, but we will move ahead. We will continue to move ahead, even in the situation where the minister wants us to go with \$195 a tonne carbon tax.

In Bill C-30, the carbon tax is \$30 and 50% will be returned to the companies if they make the effort to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions and 50% will go into retrofits for people in homes and businesses across the country.

The Conservatives have put forward a retrofit program and over four years it will deliver for about 1% of Canadian homes. It is a good idea, but it is not enough money. If we want to put money into retrofit in Canada, which we need to do and which will help every Canadian that invests in that sort of activity, then we need more money in the programs. Bill C-30 can provide that money. We know we can do better than 1% of Canadian homes over four years.

•(1645)

Finally, the minister would have us believe that every one of us would have to shell out an extra \$1,000 a year to take action on climate change. As I have run through the other three conclusions that he drew from his report, this is as erroneous as those. People will adjust to what has to be done. The result may be the other way around, where Canadians will conserve and save themselves \$1,000 a year in energy costs.

Will there be winners in an economy based on the Kyoto reduction principles of greenhouse gas emissions? There will be many winners, as there always are in our economy. Some people will take advantage of the opportunities to do the right thing, to make the right investment, to come up with the right industrial process and to put forward the correct ideas that can drive their municipalities, their provinces, their homes. Winners are always part of an economy in our country.

Who will take a hit then? Who are the people who will be hurt by the Kyoto compliance? Polluters who do not live up to what they have to do. The large multinational corporations, all friends of the Conservatives, will have to finally clean up their mess.

Mr. Brian Fitzpatrick: American corporations too.

Mr. Dennis Bevington: It could be American corporations. It could be any other company that invests in this country, or it could be Canadians as well. All corporations have the opportunity to either move forward or not move forward. We will see who has the moxie in their company and who has the wherewithal to do it.

My territory has many multinationals. Some of them come from Australia, from England and from South Africa. They all deal in diamonds. We did not set any standards for them for energy production. They all rely on good old oil to generate their electricity to heat their mines.

We have alternatives in the Northwest Territories. We have demonstrated that. We can provide them all the clean hydroelectric power they want for their facilities. When they are under some pressure to do this, they will do it. If they want the diamonds and the economic activity, they will invest in the clean energy that will make their businesses fit under the Kyoto requirements.

Years ago I had the opportunity, as a mayor in my community, to stand up against the development of the Alberta-Pacific pulp mill in northeastern Alberta. It had proposed a particular setup where it would pollute the river systems, create a lot of damage and affect my community. We fought that and proved our point. The companies were rejected at the environmental assessment. Within two or three months, they came with a solution that reduced the pollution by over 70%.

When I talked to those same companies years later, they said the best thing that happened to them in that process was they were forced to clean up their act. They said that they now had a product with an environmental tag on it. They had a facility that was the best in the world, they were selling their pulp and making money at it.

Sometimes the lesson should be that the fear of progress should never stop one from making progress. Fear does not drive a healthy economy. Fear does not drive nation building. Fear does not create a world of which our children would be proud. The environment minister should not try to scare us. We are not here to be scared. We are here to accomplish something for Canadians.

•(1650)

I hope the environment minister will join with us, bring forward Bill C-30, allow it to be debated in the House and show Canadians that when the four parties in this House of Commons work together, we can produce results for Canadians.

The time now is not for timid actions. It is not time to try to scare working Canadians away from what needs to be done. Imagine, in the 1940s, if the minister said that the cost to Canada of fighting the second world war was too much and that it was better to let those fascists have their way. We made a choice to invest in our future.

Business of Supply

Like almost 70 years ago, Canada is once again facing a serious threat, a threat to our coastal cities, to our agricultural industry, to the thing that sustains our life, the planet Earth. To deal with this threat, we need cooperative action. We need global action. We cannot turn our backs on the first global treaty that has been signed to initiate a process that will reduce the level of greenhouse gases around the world. We cannot allow the threat of climate change by putting one set of interests ahead of another. We cannot say that because we need to expand the oil and gas industry, we need to use dirtier products to add to our ability to expand. Just like in the second world war, we have to work together on this.

As part of our fight against climate change, we need a national energy strategy as well, which is based on renewable energy and uses an east-west electricity grid to transfer clean energy from one part of Canada to another. At our last convention, the NDP adopted a policy for the creation of a national energy strategy.

Only through cooperative effort and effective planning, such as the development of a national energy strategy, will we be able to successfully meet the challenge of climate change. We cannot simply put into place targets without planning, without telling everyone how are we going to move forward. We have to let them know what are going to invest in to make our future right.

We talk about investing in liquefied natural gas terminals. Choosing to export money and the problem of climate change and bring in another source of fossil fuels for Canadians, is not a solution that should fit for Canadians. We can look at our valuable resources in the tar sands and say that one way to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from these tar sands is to export the raw bitumen, export jobs, export economic opportunities and export pollution. That does not make sense either in a world in which we live. We need to work with our people in the tar sands to ensure the product they provide is clean, it works and it has the desirable attributes that we want from an energy product.

It is time for the environment minister and others in the House, who are not ready to face the challenge, to put away their scare tactics, to work with the rest of us, to work with Canadians and to come together, bring Bill C-30 forward, let us debate it in the House of Commons and let us move forward in that regard.

• (1655)

Mr. Jeff Watson (Essex, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of the Environment recently tabled a report. It was not fearmongering. It was independently assessed and evaluated. There are job losses in the short term.

However, someone else also verified short term job loss, because of Kyoto, was Buzz Hargrove. He called himself a socialist without a home. After listening to the hon. member, I can see why. The NDP and the Liberals have declared war on the auto industry with a Kyoto target and timeline that Buzz Hargrove has said is "suicidal for the economy".

I know the member opposite does not like industry saying there will be job losses, but why does he want to go after union jobs?

Mr. Dennis Bevington: Mr. Speaker, I would like to respond to the hon. member's comments about the auto industry.

I have driven nothing but North American products most of my life. I invested in another one the other day, a GMC product and it gets 42 miles to the gallon. It is comfortable. It is a nice vehicle.

The auto industry can do a lot better in producing vehicles for us than it is right now. I listened to Mr. Hargrove talk on the radio the other day and explain why we are in the situation we are in with the auto industry right now and why we are making the vehicles that we are.

Yes, mistakes were made. If we consider that we are moving forward on Kyoto, putting our investment in the auto industry into vehicles that do not match up to that, then we have a problem. We need to work on that. We need to ensure that Canadians are building cars that can make the grade in the new economy.

Mr. David McGuinty (Ottawa South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to go back to the question that was raised by the member about the economic analysis performed last week. The interesting thing about it is that the economic analysis was based on a plan that no one in this country is proposing. It is a scenario that is pure science fiction.

The only thing missing from the scenario last week was the Conservative analysis omitting to tell us that there was a giant asteroid on a collision course with the planet.

There are two obscured assumptions that I want to put to the member if I could. First of all, anyone who is not tied to a table is proposing a carbon tax and a carbon tax of \$195 a tonne. The only place this seems to have come from is the hon. minister's desk when he invented the number.

The second assumption is that Kyoto is not doable but excludes all the tools, like international emissions trading. That is like asking the founders of this city to dig the canal by using teaspoons.

Why does the member believe the Conservatives are trying to kill Kyoto by misleading Canadians on the costs and the opportunities inherent in our Kyoto obligations?

• (1700)

Mr. Dennis Bevington: Mr. Speaker, the concept that we are going to have a tax of \$195 a tonne on carbon emissions is just frankly ridiculous. Anyone who is in the energy business, the retrofit business or the renewable energy business, businesses that I am very familiar with, would be jumping up and down at the thought that we would somehow get these kinds of dollars as a tax on carbon emissions.

Within Bill C-30 there are provisions for the \$30 a tonne for carbon going into a bank fund. It is not a tax but it fixes a dollar amount around a particular substance.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to my colleague's discussions about how we need to start looking forward. As a member from the Arctic I think he would understand the complete failure we have seen over the years in terms of a government response to the need of finding alternative energy sources, particularly in our first nations communities.

Business of Supply

Along the James Bay coast, my communities are dependent on diesel generators. We are sitting beside massive potential in terms of hydroelectric power and yet the federal government downsized the responsibility for paying for the diesel fuel that is being flown in at exorbitant rates to communities with 80% unemployment. In the community of Peawanuck, for example, hydro bills were as high as \$1,200 and \$1,600. I have visited families who bathe their children once a week because they cannot afford to turn on the hot water. These are unsustainable rates for power that are being utilized. Yet, we are sitting right beside massive resources that would create sustainable energy.

The communities have asked government to work with us. We could get these communities off the diesel costs and move to long term sustainability. Yet there never seems to be any movement from the bureaucrats at the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs. It is always put off until next year for another budget that never comes.

I would like to ask the hon. member this. Does he have recommendations on how we can start to build sustainable communities in the north which are not dependent on the cost of resources that we simply cannot pay for?

Mr. Dennis Bevington: Mr. Speaker, I have had a lot of experience in small, remote community energy systems. There are many opportunities there. I look at the community I visited two weeks ago in my own riding, Wha Ti, which is a small Tlicho community. The community wanted to put in a mini hydro system, a one megawatt system that would not only light its homes, but heat them too.

Once we make the move with Bill C-30, once we agree what we are going to accomplish here, these projects will move forward quickly. Once Canada knows the direction it has to move in, right across this country, we will see a flourishing of projects like we cannot believe.

I spent time on the Federation of Canadian Municipalities green fund. I have seen the projects that are available across this whole country. We have a great future ahead if we simply make some decisions here in this Parliament and get going with the new economy.

Mr. Mike Wallace (Burlington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member from the NDP talked about Bill C-30 and about Bill C-288. We are technically debating what the Bloc has put in front of us.

My issue is this. I have heard a number of times today about fearmongering about the numbers. I guess my colleague does not like the numbers. Those members are certainly capable of talking about what is going to happen to the environment if we do not do anything. We agree that we need to do something about it, but we do not call that fearmongering. When they get the facts on the financial side on Bill C-288, they like to call it fearmongering, which just does not make any coherent sense to me.

It would take a cut of about 30% a year to 2012 because we have to catch up from where we were to get to where we have to be in order to meet those targets in 2012. Based on Bill C-288, which is in front of the Senate, and based on the fact that we are so far behind because of Liberal inaction, does my colleague think it is actually feasible to cut greenhouse gases with no cost to the economy at a rate of 30% a year between now and 2012?

• (1705)

Mr. Dennis Bevington: Mr. Speaker, I am not willing to say that Canada cannot accomplish something. I am not willing to stand here and say that we cannot accomplish the goals that we set out to accomplish. I have more respect for Canadians.

There are many things to do in this country. The government just needs to give the signal and the direction. If we fail in accomplishing our goals in the next four or five years, that will be something. We need to try. We need to move ahead. We cannot simply sit on our butts here.

Mr. Mark Warawa (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the NDP suggested a plan for a transition fund for the thousands of employees who would now be unemployed because of the Liberal plan. What is the member's suggestion for the funding of this transition fund? How long would it take for this transition fund?

We are asking for facts. We had to do the Liberals' homework because they did not provide the costs. If he thinks that is not correct, then what does he think the real cost is?

With respect to the transition fund, which was the NDP proposal to take care of unemployed workers if the Liberal plan went ahead, what is his suggestion for how long that transition fund would last?

Mr. Dennis Bevington: Mr. Speaker, we can start to invest in energy efficiency today.

I was watching television last night and saw what the Chinese are proposing for 2010 in all their buildings. They propose to reduce 50% of their energy requirements in all of their buildings by 2010. They are pushing forward with a very ambitious program. This is the kind of thing that is reported in our national media. This is the kind of direction that we need to take.

Investing billions of dollars a year in retrofits in our homes and our businesses, where the largest greenhouse gas savings are available to the consumer, to small businesses, are things that are going to return right away. We need to invest in the opportunities that exist for carbon—

The Deputy Speaker: I hesitate to interrupt the hon. member but there is a need to resume the debate.

The hon. Minister of Labour.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Jean-Pierre Blackburn (Minister of Labour and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak today in this House. I would like those who are watching us to know what is in the motion before us. It says:

That the House call on the government to set fixed greenhouse gas reduction targets as soon as possible so as to meet the objectives of the Kyoto Protocol, a prerequisite for the establishment, as expeditiously as possible, of a carbon exchange in Montréal.

It was the hon. member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie who introduced this motion.

Business of Supply

When we talk about the Kyoto protocol, what are we talking about? In short, in 1997, Canada and 160 other member states of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change met in Kyoto, Japan. Under the Kyoto protocol agreed to at the time, Canada made a commitment to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 6% below 1990 levels. It is now 2007 and we have to reduce the emissions by 6% of what they were 17 years ago, by 2008 and no later than 2012.

However, we have to consider the reality. After the inaction of the previous governments over the past 10 years, Canada's greenhouse gas emissions have not stopped increasing, such that they now exceed 35% of our Kyoto protocol targets. In other words, to achieve our targets, starting next year Canada would have to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 33% on average for every year of the Kyoto protocol reporting period. To achieve this draconian reduction in the next eight months, Canada would have to strictly impose severe measures that would have serious repercussions on the country's families, jobs and economy.

We wanted independent economists to analyze the situation. I would like to share with you the names of those who participated in the analysis. Don Drummond is the senior vice president and chief economist of the TD Bank Financial Group. Jean-Thomas Bernard is an economics professor at Université Laval. Christopher Green is an economics professor at McGill. Mark Jaccard is a professor at Simon Fraser University's School of Resource and Environmental Management. Carl Sonnen is the president of Informetrica Limited. These people analyzed the situation.

Before getting into what could happen, I would like to add that if this were easy, if this were not a problem for our economy, why would we not go ahead with the Kyoto protocol? Why would we not propose an even better Kyoto protocol plus? If this were easy, why would we not do it? We know it would be popular. Here are the reasons why we are not doing it.

The report considered repercussions on Canadian families. If I am not mistaken, 275,000 Canadians would lose their jobs between now and 2009. That is the equivalent of the entire Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean region. Electricity bills would go up by 50%. The price of gas would rise by 60%, and natural gas for home heating would double in price. Some say the Canadian economy would shrink by over 4.2%. That would mean a deep recession in Canada in 2008, that is, next year. That would mean a recession as bad as the one Canadians experienced in 1981 and 1982, the worst one we have had since the second world war. Canadians still remember that one.

If this were easy, if it were good for Canada, why would our government not go ahead with the Kyoto protocol? Why would we not go ahead with a Kyoto plus plan? Because the economy would be devastated.

However, we will not stand back and do nothing. We have said that we want to take action and move forward. In the coming days, the Minister of the Environment will set greenhouse gas reduction targets for industry.

I would also like to thank you, Mr. Speaker, for giving me the opportunity to add my remarks to those of my colleagues in response to the motion put forward by the hon. member for Rosemont—La

Petite-Patrie, calling on the government to set targets for greenhouse gas reductions.

From the beginning, our government has made it abundantly clear that we are committed to creating a cleaner, healthier environment, an environment that will improve the lives of Canadians. In our economic statement last fall, "Advantage Canada", our government told Canadians that we were seeking achievable results to create a healthier environment for our generation and future generations.

● (1710)

In the past, Canadians have heard a great deal of talk—as I said earlier—but have seen very little in terms of concrete measures. This has meant that we are a long way from reaching the targets set 17 years ago.

In this year's budget, our government took concrete action to preserve our environment and improve the air we all breathe. We have already begun setting this out in the budget. For the first time, the government's program on air quality will include Canada-wide regulations on greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution created by key sectors of industry.

Our air quality program moves away from voluntary approaches and the patchwork of regulatory processes that exists across the country. The voluntary approach, advocated by the previous Liberal government, would not allow us to achieve the results that Canadians expect.

Finally, I would like to quote the Leader of the Opposition who stated when he was Minister of the Environment, "We know that agreements can work when they are voluntary". He did say "can" and not "will". And now for the results: we know that we are far from the target of 6% below 1990 levels. Our government is focussed instead on a national framework that will be compulsory and will achieve concrete results, while respecting the Canadian economy and maintaining jobs for Canadians, and ensuring that our economy can continue to grow while meeting the objective of reducing greenhouse gases.

Furthermore, as part of the program, the government will soon announce short-term greenhouse gas and air pollutant reduction targets for the main industrial sectors. These targets will be reached through the concerted efforts of businesses in all sectors of the economy and all—

● (1715)

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please. It being 5:15 p.m., it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the business of supply.

[*English*]

The question is on the amendment. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the amendment?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Deputy Speaker: All those in favour of the amendment will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

Business of Supply

The Deputy Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Deputy Speaker: In my opinion the yeas have it.

And five or more members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: Call in the members.

And the bells having rung:

• (1735)

Hon. Jay Hill: Mr. Speaker, I think if you were to seek it you would find unanimous consent to adopt the amendment unanimously.

The Speaker: Is there unanimous consent to adopt the amendment?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Amendment agreed to)

The Speaker: The next question is on the main motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Speaker: All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Speaker: In my opinion the yeas have it.

And five or more members having risen:

• (1745)

Before the Clerk announced the results of the vote:

Mr. Yvon Godin: Mr. Speaker, I just want to make sure that the member for Toronto—Danforth and the member for Windsor West are voting yes. We did not hear it.

The Speaker: It is confirmed they were in fact named.

(The House divided on the motion, as amended, which was agreed to on the following division:)

(Division No. 160)

YEAS

Members

Abbott	Ablonczy
Albrecht	Alghabra
Allen	Allison
Ambrose	Anders
André	Angus
Arthur	Asselin
Bachand	Bagnell
Bains	Baird
Barbot	Barnes
Batters	Beaumier
Bélangier	Bell (Vancouver Island North)
Bell (North Vancouver)	Benoit
Bernier	Bevilacqua

Bevington	Bigras
Black	Blackburn
Blaikie	Blais
Blaney	Bonin
Bonsant	Boshcoff
Bouchard	Boucher
Bourgeois	Breitkreuz
Brisson	Brown (Oakville)
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)	Brown (Barrie)
Bruinooge	Brunelle
Byrne	Calkins
Cannan (Kelowna—Lake Country)	Cannis
Cannon (Pontiac)	Cardin
Carrie	Carrier
Casey	Casson
Chan	Charlton
Chong	Chow
Christopherson	Clement
Coderre	Comartin
Cotler	Crête
Crowder	Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley)
Cullen (Etobicoke North)	Cummins
Cuzner	D'Amours
Davidson	Davies
Day	DeBellefeuille
Del Mastro	Demers
Deschamps	Dewar
Dhaliwal	Dhalla
Dion	Dosanjh
Doyle	Dryden
Duceppe	Dykstra
Emerson	Epp
Eyking	Faille
Fast	Fitzpatrick
Flaherty	Fletcher
Freeman	Fry
Gagnon	Galipeau
Gallant	Gaudet
Gauthier	Godfrey
Godin	Goldring
Goodyear	Gourde
Graham	Gravel
Grewal	Guarnieri
Guay	Guergis
Guimond	Hanger
Harper	Harris
Harvey	Hawn
Hearn	Hiebert
Hill	Hinton
Holland	Ignatieff
Jaffer	Jean
Jennings	Julian
Kadis	Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
Karetak-Lindell	Karygiannis
Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)	Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Khan	Komarnicki
Kotto	Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
Laforest	Laframboise
Lake	Lauzon
Lavallée	Layton
LeBlanc	Lee
Lemay	Lemieux
Lessard	Lévesque
Lukiwski	Lunn
Lunney	Lussier
MacAulay	MacKay (Central Nova)
MacKenzie	Malhi
Malo	Maloney
Manning	Mark
Marleau	Marston
Martin (Winnipeg Centre)	Martin (LaSalle—Émard)
Martin (Sault Ste. Marie)	Masse
Mathysen	Matthews
Mayes	McCallum
McDonough	McGuinity
McGuire	McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
McTeague	Ménard (Hochelaga)
Ménard (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin)	Menzies
Merasty	Merrifield
Mills	Minna
Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)	
Moore (Fundy Royal)	
Mourani	Murphy (Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe)
Murphy (Charlottetown)	Nadeau

Business of Supply
(Division No. 161)

Nash	Neville
Nicholson	Norlock
O'Connor	Obhrai
Oda	Ouellet
Owen	Pacetti
Pallister	Paquette
Paradis	Patry
Pearson	Perron
Peterson	Petit
Plamondon	Poilievre
Prentice	Preston
Priddy	Proulx
Rajotte	Ratansi
Redman	Regan
Reid	Richardson
Ritz	Robillard
Rodriguez	Rota
Roy	Russell
Savage	Savoie
Scarpaleggia	Scheer
Schellenberger	Sgro
Shiple	Siksay
Silva	Simard
Simms	Skelton
Smith	Solberg
Sorenson	St-Cyr
St-Hilaire	St. Amand
St. Denis	Stanton
Stoffer	Storseth
Strahl	Sweet
Szabo	Telegdi
Temelkovski	Thibault (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les
Basques)	
Thibault (West Nova)	Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)
Thompson (Wild Rose)	Tilson
Toews	Tonks
Trost	Turner
Tweed	Valley
Van Kesteren	Van Loan
Vellacott	Verner
Vincent	Wallace
Wappel	Warawa
Warkentin	Wasylcia-Leis
Watson	Wilfert
Williams	Wilson
Wrzesnewskyj	Yelich
Zed— 283	

NAYS

Nil

PAIRED

Members

Bellavance	Bezan
Devolin	Finley
Lalonde	Picard— 6

The Speaker: I declare the motion, as amended, carried.

AFGHANISTAN

The House resumed from April 19 consideration of the motion.

The Speaker: Pursuant to order made on Thursday, April 19, 2007, the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion of the member for Bourassa relating to the business of supply.

• (1755)

[Translation]

(The House divided on the motion, which was negated on the following division:)

Alghabra
Asselin
Bagnell
Barbot
Beaumier
Bell (North Vancouver)
Bigras
Bonin
Boshcoff
Bourgeois
Brown (Oakville)
Byrne
Cardin
Chan
Cotler
Cullen (Etobicoke North)
D'Amours
Demers
Dhaliwal
Dion
Dryden
Eyking
Freeman
Gagnon
Gauthier
Graham
Guarnieri
Guimond
Ignatieff
Kadis
Karygiannis
Laforest
Lavallée
Lee
Lessard
Lussier
Malhi
Maloney
Martin (LaSalle—Émard)
McCallum
McGuire
McTeague
Ménard (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin)
Minna
Murphy (Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe)
Nadeau
Ouellet
Pacetti
Patry
Perron
Plamondon
Ratansi
Regan
Rodriguez
Roy
Savage
Sgro
Simard
St-Cyr
St. Amand
Szabo
Temelkovski
Basques)
Thibault (West Nova)
Turner
Vincent
Wilfert
Wrzesnewskyj

YEAS

Members

André
Bachand
Bains
Barnes
Bélangier
Bevilacqua
Blais
Bonsant
Bouchard
Brison
Brunelle
Cannis
Carrier
Coderre
Crête
Cuzner
DeBellefeuille
Deschamps
Dhalla
Dosanjh
Duceppe
Faille
Fry
Gaudet
Godfrey
Gravel
Guay
Holland
Jennings
Karetak-Lindell
Kotto
Laframboise
LeBlanc
Lemay
Lévesque
MacAulay
Malo
Marleau
Matthews
McGuinty
McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
Ménard (Hochelaga)
Merasty
Mourani
Murphy (Charlottetown)
Neville
Owen
Paquette
Pearson
Peterson
Proulx
Redman
Robillard
Rota
Russell
Scarpaleggia
Silva
Simms
St-Hilaire
St. Denis
Telegdi
Thibault (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les
Tonks
Valley
Wappel
Wilson
Zed— 134

NAYS

Members

Abbott	Ablonczy
Albrecht	Allen
Allison	Ambrose
Anders	Anderson
Angus	Arthur

Government Orders

Baird	Batters
Bell (Vancouver Island North)	Benoit
Bernier	Bevington
Black	Blackburn
Blaikie	Blaney
Boucher	Breitkreuz
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)	Brown (Barrie)
Bruinooge	Calkins
Cannan (Kelowna—Lake Country)	Cannon (Pontiac)
Carrie	Casey
Casson	Charlton
Chong	Chow
Christopherson	Clement
Comartin	Crowder
Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley)	Cummins
Davidson	Davies
Day	Del Mastro
Dewar	Doyle
Dykstra	Emerson
Epp	Fast
Fitzpatrick	Flaherty
Fletcher	Galipeau
Gallant	Godin
Golding	Goodyear
Gourde	Grewal
Guergis	Hanger
Harper	Harris
Harvey	Hawn
Hearn	Hiebert
Hill	Hinton
Jaffer	Jean
Julian	Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)	Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Khan	Komarnicki
Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)	Lake
Lauzon	Layton
Lemieux	Lukiwski
Lunn	Lunney
MacKay (Central Nova)	MacKenzie
Manning	Mark
Marston	Martin (Winnipeg Centre)
Martin (Sault Ste. Marie)	Masse
Mathysen	Mayes
McDonough	Menzies
Merrifield	Mills
Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)	Nicholson
Moore (Fundy Royal)	O'Connor
Nash	Oda
Norlock	Paradis
Obhrai	Poilievre
Pallister	Preston
Petit	Rajotte
Prentice	Richardson
Priddy	Savoie
Reid	Schellenberger
Ritz	Siksay
Scheer	Smith
Shiple	Sorenson
Skelton	Stoffer
Solberg	Strahl
Stanton	Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)
Storseth	Tilson
Sweet	Trost
Thompson (Wild Rose)	Van Kesteren
Toews	Vellacott
Tweed	Wallace
Van Loan	Warkentin
Verner	Watson
Warawa	Welch — 150
Wasylycia-Leis	
Williams	

PAIRED

Members

Bellavance	Bezan
Devolin	Finley
Lalonde	Picard — 6

The Speaker: I declare the motion lost.

[English]

CANADA ELECTIONS ACT

The House resumed from April 23 consideration of the amendment made by the Senate to Bill C-16, An Act to amend the Canada Elections Act.

The Speaker: The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion to disagree with the Senate amendment to Bill C-16.

The hon. chief government whip is rising on a point of order.

Hon. Jay Hill: Mr. Speaker, I think, were you to seek it, you would find unanimous consent to apply the results of the vote just taken to the motion presently before the House, with Conservative members present this evening voting yes.

The Speaker: Is there unanimous consent to proceed in this way?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Hon. Karen Redman: Mr. Speaker, Liberals will be voting no.

[Translation]

Mr. Michel Guimond: Mr. Speaker, the members from the Bloc Québécois will vote in favour of the motion.

• (1800)

Mr. Yvon Godin: Mr. Speaker, the members from the NDP will vote against the motion.

Mr. André Arthur: Mr. Speaker, I am voting in favour of the motion.

Ms. Louise Thibault: Mr. Speaker, I am voting against this motion.

(The House divided on the motion, which was agreed to on the following division:)

(Division No. 162)

YEAS

Members

Abbott	Ablonczy
Albrecht	Allen
Allison	Ambrose
Anders	Anderson
André	Arthur
Asselin	Bachand
Baird	Barbot
Batters	Benoit
Bernier	Bigras
Blackburn	Blais
Blaney	Bonsant
Bouchard	Boucher
Bourgeois	Breitkreuz
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)	Brown (Barrie)
Bruinooge	Brunelle
Calkins	Cannan (Kelowna—Lake Country)
Cannon (Pontiac)	Cardin
Carrie	Carrier
Casey	Casson
Chong	Clement
Crête	Cummins
Davidson	Day
DeBellefeuille	Del Mastro
Demers	Deschamps
Doyle	Duceppe
Dykstra	Emerson
Epp	Faille
Fast	Fitzpatrick
Flaherty	Fletcher

Private Members' Business

Freeman
Galipeau
Gaudet
Goldring
Gourde
Grewal
Guergis
Hanger
Harris
Hawn
Hiebert
Hinton
Jean
Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)
Khan
Kotto
Laforest
Lake
Lavallée
Lemieux
Lévesque
Lunn
Lussier
MacKenzie
Manning
Mayes
Ménard (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin)
Merrifield
Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)
Moore (Fundy Royal)
Mourani
Nicholson
O'Connor
Oda
Pallister
Paradis
Petit
Poilievre
Preston
Reid
Ritz
Scheer
Shipley
Smith
Sorenson
St-Hilaire
Storseth
Sweet
Thompson (Wild Rose)
Toews
Tweed
Van Loan
Verner
Wallace
Warkentin
Williams

Gagnon
Gallant
Gauthier
Goodyear
Gravel
Guay
Guimond
Harper
Harvey
Hearn
Hill
Jaffer
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Komarnicki
Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
Laframboise
Lauzon
Lemay
Lessard
Lukiwski
Lunney
MacKay (Central Nova)
Malo
Mark
Ménard (Hochelaga)
Menzies
Mills
Nadeau
Norlock
Obhrai
Ouellet
Paquette
Perron
Plamondon
Prentice
Rajotte
Richardson
Roy
Schellenberger
Skelton
Solberg
St-Cyr
Stanton
Strahl
Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)
Tilson
Trost
Van Kesteren
Vellacott
Vincent
Warawa
Watson
Yelich — 168

Jennings
Kadis
Karygiannis
LeBlanc
MacAulay
Maloney
Marston
Martin (LaSalle—Émard)
Masse
Matthews
McDonough
McGuire
McTeague
Minna
Murphy (Charlottetown)
Neville
Pacetti
Pearson
Priddy
Ratansi
Regan
Rodriguez
Russell
Savoie
Sgro
Silva
Simms
St. Denis
Szabo
Temelkovski
Basques)
Thibault (West Nova)
Turner
Wappel
Wilfert
Wrzesnewskyj

Julian
Karetak-Lindell
Layton
Lee
Malhi
Marleau
Martin (Winnipeg Centre)
Martin (Sault Ste. Marie)
Mathysen
McCallum
McGuinity
McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
Merasty
Murphy (Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe)
Nash
Owen
Patry
Peterson
Proulx
Redman
Robillard
Rota
Savage
Scarpaleggia
Siksay
Simard
St. Amand
Stoffer
Telegdi
Thibault (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les
Tonks
Valley
Wasylycia-Leis
Wilson
Zed — 116

PAIRED

Members

Bellavance
Devolin
Lalonde

Bezan
Finley
Picard — 6

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

[*English*]

It being 6 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's order paper.

NAYS

Members

Alghabra
Bagnell
Barnes
Bélanger
Bell (North Vancouver)
Bevington
Blaikie
Boshcoff
Brown (Oakville)
Cannis
Charlton
Christopherson
Comartin
Crowder
Cullen (Etobicoke North)
D'Amours
Dewar
Dhalla
Dosanjh
Eyking
Godfrey
Graham
Holland

Angus
Bains
Beaumier
Bell (Vancouver Island North)
Bevilacqua
Black
Bonin
Brisson
Byrne
Chan
Chow
Coderre
Cotler
Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley)
Cuzner
Davies
Dhaliwal
Dion
Dryden
Fry
Godin
Guarnieri
Ignatieff

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*English*]

NATIONAL BLOOD DONOR WEEK ACT

Hon. Navdeep Bains (Mississauga—Brampton South, Lib.) moved that Bill S-214, An Act respecting a National Blood Donor Week, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to speak today at the second reading stage of Bill S-214, An Act respecting a National Blood Donor Week.

The World Health Organization celebrates World Blood Donor Day on June 14 every year, at which time 192 WHO members and over 200 volunteer blood donor organizations lend their support to this cause. This bill would allow Canadians to join in this worldwide effort with a full week of celebration each year.

Private Members' Business

I would point out to hon. members that Canada has one of the safest blood systems in the world. At some point in their lives, over half of Canadians will require blood or blood products for themselves or a family member during their lifetime. What is more alarming is the fact that less than 4% of eligible Canadians donate blood every year.

Canada has a long history of supporting blood donation, dating back to World War II. Between 1940 and 1945, the blood for the wounded program collected over 2.4 million units of blood from a population of just 11.5 million people. That was a per capita rate three to four times higher than the United States or Great Britain. That is a proud history and we need to ensure that blood donation in Canada will have a proud future as well.

Every year, hundreds of thousands of Canadians receive donated blood or donated blood products, such as plasma, platelets and marrow, following accidents, surgeries, cancer treatments and for burn therapies. Blood or blood products are also used for other blood related treatments or diseases.

There is not a member of the House who would argue against the need for more blood donors in Canada to meet the demand for blood and blood products and that a greater awareness of the importance of becoming a blood donor is required to engage more Canadians in helping their fellow citizens. I am glad to be part of that 4% club. Initially, I too had reservations about donating blood but over the past few years the experience has been nothing but positive.

Canadians cannot afford to be idle and think that if they do not donate someone else will. Each of us must think, "If I don't, who will?" An hour of time is all that is required. I believe that each of us has an hour to spare. Blood donation includes not only the gift of whole blood but gifts of plasma and bone marrow as well.

Every blood donor has the power to save the lives of up to three people. Blood donors are volunteers who are not remunerated and, therefore, the act of donating blood and blood products is a genuine act of altruism. Blood donors in Canada are the lifeblood of their communities and their acts of kindness and generosity should be honoured with a national week of celebration.

I would like to describe to the members of the House how the blood donation system works in Canada and how people benefit from it. Donations are gathered at 45 permanent collection sites and more than 17,000 special mobile clinics are held across Canada. These are operated by almost 6,000 employees and in excess of 40,000 volunteers. The end result is a yearly blood collection of nearly 1.1 million units of blood from over half a million donors. This is our blood system.

To put another perspective on the importance of blood donation, roughly 137,000 Canadians are diagnosed with cancer every year. We all know that cancer patients often need blood or blood products to survive their treatments. As well, the number of transplants has increased steadily from 16 per 1 million Canadians in 1981 to 59 per 1 million Canadians in 2000. Transplant surgeries are lengthy procedures requiring significant amounts of blood. Additionally, the number of total hip replacements done in Canada during the same period increased by just under 20%.

There are several kinds of blood donation Canadians may give and/or receive. Many situations are unique and each person's need is unique. Canadian Blood Services and Héma-Québec are responsible for recruiting blood and bone marrow donors, as well as collecting blood and plasma at collection sites and donor clinics annually.

Additionally, CBS and Héma-Québec collect whole blood. Whole blood is comprised of red blood cells, white blood cells and plasma. Some donations are held and transfused as whole blood. Others are processed to separate red blood cells and plasma.

● (1805)

Further, some donors donate only their plasma. Plasma may be transfused into a patient or further processed into other products.

I would like to touch upon blood platelets which can be donated as well and they are collected at these specific locations. All main CBS and Héma-Québec donor clinics have a program for this.

One area of blood donation that may affect a growing number of Canadians is bone marrow donation. I am certain that many members in the House know someone who has been a recipient of donated bone marrow.

The unrelated bone marrow donor registry is when CBS collects blood samples for donors who wish to join its registry. CBS then records the specific proteins that make an individual's bone marrow unique. This information is used to match donors with patients who need bone marrow transplants.

Interestingly, the average amount of blood in one person is five litres and there are approximately 450 millilitres of blood in a unit. On average, 4.6 units of blood are required per patient. In 2004-05, Canadian Blood Services collected approximately 850,000 units of whole blood.

I know there may be a member or a Canadian watching this debate who is wondering about the safety of Canada's blood supply and/or the safety of blood donation. I know other members will agree that Canada's blood system is safe. I know other members here in the House this evening will want to join with me in reassuring Canadians that our blood system is safe for them to use, whether as a donor or as a receiver.

The Canadian Blood Services makes safety paramount and, from the top down and across the organization at all levels, it meets or exceeds all relevant national and international standards for safety in blood management and operations.

The mandate of the Canadian Blood Services is to be responsible for a national blood supply system which assures access to a safe, secure, cost effective, affordable and accessible supply of quality blood, blood products and their alternatives, and supports their appropriate use.

The Canadian Blood Services is also involved in monitoring and surveillance and has a department responsible for treating diseases that could affect our donor population.

Private Members' Business

In addition, the Canadian Blood Services commission conducts studies that examine the impact of some policies on the security of the blood supply. As such, the Canadian Blood Services assesses trends to ensure a balance between the safety of the blood system and the availability of blood products for Canadians.

Further, Health Canada is responsible for disease surveillance in Canada. Additionally, through its role as the regulatory authority for the blood system in Canada, Health Canada monitors national and international trends that affect blood management and safety.

We also have the National Blood Safety Council which advises the federal government on blood safety matters that fall within its jurisdictional responsibilities.

All whole blood donations undergo a process whereby white blood cells are removed. White blood cells often carry viruses and bacteria that can be detrimental to the recovery of the recipient. To that end, the World Health Organization has said that Canada's blood system is among the safest in the world.

I have discussed why people should donate blood. I have outlined the various types of and needs for blood donation and I have addressed blood donor safety concerns.

Now that we know why blood donation is so critical, I just want to touch on why this bill is so important for those who have either donated their blood, received donated blood or work behind the scenes, and especially for those who have not yet donated.

At the very core of blood donation is volunteerism. No one is compelled to give their blood. There is no law saying that we must roll up our sleeves and donate blood. There is only the satisfaction in knowing that volunteering to do so matters, that volunteering to do so has saved a life and that volunteering to do so may save our own life one day.

Bill S-214 is vital because it celebrates the spirit of volunteerism, kindness and altruism. When I have spoken with people who have donated blood, or do so regularly, I ask them why they are keen on donating their time and their blood. In response I hear very heartwarming stories about their families' needs, their desire to give something back to their communities or just to know that they have done something to help others.

• (1810)

As I have said earlier, nearly 50% of Canadians will need donated blood sometime in their lives. Nearly half of Canadians will need blood that has been supplied by only 4% of our population. I believe we have a responsibility to raise the awareness of the need for blood. We need to raise the awareness that donating blood is safe, that it does not cost a dime and is something that is desperately needed.

We also need to make people aware that their selflessness is appreciated. People may not get instant gratification from a family member, friend or neighbour, but there is someone or some family member who appreciates more than words can articulate their thanks and appreciation.

Bill S-214 will do just that. Every year during the week of June 14 Canadians will recognize the kind acts of others when it comes to

donating blood. Every year during the week of June 14 blood donors will know that their kind acts are appreciated.

Canadians must know, by giving just an hour of their time a couple of times a year, they can help a father become a grandfather, a young girl become an older sister and proud parents see their children grow up. This is why I ask the House to pass Bill S-214.

• (1815)

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal (Newton—North Delta, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the hon. member for sharing his remarks with the House.

I am very proud to stand on behalf of British Columbians because blood donation is very important. In B.C. this year the Sikh nation has topped the number of people who have donated blood. They had a reason to donate. They donated in memory of the 1984 pogrom of Sikhs in New Delhi. This is a very good way to establish awareness.

It is good to establish the week of June 14 as blood donor week. How will the member take the necessary steps to inform our communities that are not well informed about blood donation?

Hon. Navdeep Bains: Mr. Speaker, the member highlights a very important element of the awareness campaign we need to pursue if Bill S-214 passes the House and we create an act respecting a national blood donor week.

Many new Canadians who come to Canada have had a negative experience or a bad experience about donating blood. I have heard horror stories about it. It is so important to engage new Canadians to get involved in the process.

If we look at the statistical information, of 4% of people who donate, the vast majority are not new Canadians. It is very important that we tap into that segment of society in creating an awareness.

Awareness can take place at many different levels. As parliamentarians, we have a responsibility through our constituency and Ottawa offices and through our networks to promote and advocate for a national blood donor week. I believe there will be a campaign to create further awareness as well through the media.

There is no doubt that we need to target elements or segments of society that tend not to donate blood. Everyone needs to be included. We all benefit from this process. Blood does not discriminate. People who donate blood should not discriminate as well.

Mr. Steven Fletcher (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am happy voice my commitment and the government's commitment to the thousands of Canadians who give and receive blood or blood products each and every day by supporting the designation of the second week in June as national blood donor week.

Private Members' Business

The need for donated blood in Canada is ongoing. Recruiting and sustaining donors currently relies on day to day hard work and targeted campaigns throughout the year. A recent example was the November 2006 Operation Roll Up Your Sleeves campaign through which more than 20,000 Canadians donated blood and good wishes in honour of our Canadian Forces troops and veterans.

It was during the second world war that Canadians began donating blood and the country's first blood bank was born. Today, we have a system that crosses the country and is there when Canadians need it, every day of the year.

To meet our nation's requirements, one million units of blood must be collected from about 600,000 Canadians. That number represents just 5% of the population whose generous donations will give the gift of life to accident survivors, cancer patients, transplant recipients and many others, including myself.

Somebody in each of our lives has required or will require donated blood or blood components. Honouring Canada's blood donors through a national blood donor week makes it all the more likely the system will be there the next time our loved ones need it.

Canadians can also expect the need for blood to increase due to commitments across the country to decrease surgical wait times and advancements in science and technology that lead to new medical interventions. Designating a national blood donor week will help meet the need by encouraging existing donors to keep donating, infrequent donors to become regular donors and new donors to come forward.

However, it does not end there.

A sustainable blood donation system relies on other types of generosity too. Some people are unable to donate blood for health or other reasons, but this does not mean they cannot help. The warm smile and small talk that welcomes first time donors and calms their jittery nerves comes from a volunteer. The community blood drives that make it possible to donate rely largely on the work of volunteers. Volunteers spread the word and attract new donors by speaking publicly and privately about blood donation.

Recruiting and encouraging donors is an ongoing activity for which there will always be a need. The creation of national blood donor week will help to attract all types of skills required to keep the system going year round.

The demand for blood and blood products is constant throughout the year, but the reality is that donations drop off in the summer months. During the summer a drop in donations is managed through targeted drives for certain blood types, or in certain areas, or certain times such as long weekends when road accidents are more likely to happen.

The creation of a national blood donor week during the second week of June will remind existing and potential donors that the system still needs and appreciates them. It may also help to make those targeted blood drives all the more productive.

The second week in June also marks the World Health Organization's World Blood Day. The purpose of this day is threefold: to highlight the need for safe blood products; to thank and honour blood donors; and to encourage regular donation. Both the

Canadian Blood Services and Héma-Québec support and are involved in the celebration of World Blood Day on June 14.

By designating the second week of June as Canada's national blood donor week, we will be joining international efforts to achieve safe blood systems everywhere.

● (1820)

I urge all my colleagues to vote in favour of designating the second week in June as national blood donor week so we can show existing blood donors, other volunteers and those yet to come that the existence of a safe blood and blood component supply will be there when their loved ones need it. It is their kindness and generosity that is appreciated by all Canadians.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Christiane Gagnon (Québec, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak in favour of this bill, whose main objective is to raise awareness about the importance of becoming a blood donor and to encourage more people to give blood.

The date selected is June 14. That date coincides with the day set aside each year by the World Health Organization on which to commend and thank those who give the most precious gift of all, the gift of life.

In many circumstances, having a blood transfusion can often save a life. The World Health Organization, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the International Society of Blood Transfusion and the International Federation of Blood Donor Organizations have chosen Canada to host this year's World Blood Donor Day, which will be held on June 14.

The Bloc adds its voice and agrees to vote in favour of this bill. June 14 was adopted in honour of researcher Karl Landsteiner. He was born on June 14, 1968, in Vienna, Austria, and died on June 24, 1943. He discovered the first system of classification of blood groups, or the ABO blood group system. A number of member states of the World Health Organization will work together and are associated with this World Health Day. The 192 member states of the WHO, 181 National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and 50 volunteer blood donor organizations have also agreed to support this World Blood Day.

In this context, we are in favour of this bill to respond to the request from Héma-Québec and Canadian Blood Services and to join this global awareness initiative. Those who give their blood do something significant that some describe as heroic.

Currently, Héma-Québec and Canadian Blood Services collect only 1.1 million units of blood from between 3% to 4% of eligible donors, which is not enough to meet the needs. Furthermore, the need for units of blood is increasing.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank, along with those who give blood, the thousands of volunteers who work at blood donor clinics.

Private Members' Business

The following is an overview of the needs, which are great. It is a daily challenge because blood components are perishable. For example, a platelet is viable for just five days and blood components are viable for six days. We have an important role to play to maintain an adequate supply. Every 80 seconds someone needs blood. A liver transplant requires 100 units of blood; a blood transfusion following a car accident or a bullet injury requires 50 units of blood; a hip replacement or a brain aneurysm may require six to eight units of blood. We also need blood for cancer cases. We know that 137,000 cases of cancer are diagnosed every year and hip replacements have increased by 2%.

In that context, we need more blood donors in order to have more units of blood. We must not forget that Héma-Québec was created at the height of the tainted blood scandal. This was a terrible scandal affecting thousands of victims in Quebec and Canada. Some 1,200 people were infected with the AIDS virus and 12,000 others were infected with the hepatitis C virus.

The different governments and parties that have been in power—whether Liberal or Conservative—were tight-fisted and delayed compensating all victims of tainted blood. It is sad to see that they had to wait at least a decade before being compensated. First an inquiry was held and then the victims had to wait five or six years more.

● (1825)

Even today, although satisfied with the \$1 billion settlement, the victims find it difficult to accept that there was no compensation while waiting for the final settlement. \$20,000 could have been made available while awaiting the final settlement.

This horrible tragedy could not be ignored. We know that expertise and a great deal of vigilance are required of those responsible for blood collection. Health Canada has some responsibility with regard to tainted blood.

● (1830)

I would also like to mention another aspect of this issue that has not been touched on today. Members of certain religions are told to refuse blood transfusions. Refusing treatment is a little difficult for me to understand although I realize that we are free to refuse or accept medical treatment. There is one religious group, the Jehovah's Witnesses, that tells its members to refuse any blood transfusion, because it is contrary to their religious beliefs.

I find this sad because a lot of work is being done to get people interested in giving blood. If a religious group does not allow its members to receive blood transfusions, people could die.

● (1835)

One of my constituents, Jonathan Lavoie, watched his brother die because he refused to receive a blood transfusion. He could not accept a transfusion because the Jehovah's Witnesses tell their members to refuse such medical treatment.

We recognize that refusing treatment is a fundamental human right and that it is difficult to oppose that choice when people make it consciously. But in what context does a person make that decision? Is the person sufficiently informed to refuse or accept a blood transfusion?

Today, on behalf of the Bloc Québécois, I am happy to speak in favour of adopting World Blood Donor Day given that on June 14, Canada will host World Blood Donor Day. The Bloc Québécois will have done its part in agreeing to host this day in Canada and Quebec.

[English]

Ms. Penny Priddy (Surrey North, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise to join my colleagues in supporting this bill to declare the week of June 14 national blood donor week, as have 192 other countries around the world. I cannot imagine why anybody would oppose this.

The 192 countries that are members of the World Health Organization have already done this. As a country that cares about its health care and its health care system and wants people to be treated quickly, efficiently and as meets their needs, then we can do no less than acknowledge that.

It is important to look at where we have come from and where we are but also to look at what declaring the week of June 14 blood donor week would really mean and what we might need to do. I think my colleague from Newton—North Delta referred to this earlier.

Let us think about what it used to be like even in 1943 or after the war when blood banks were established and we saw blood being donated and used more frequently in terms of blood donations. We were still seeing babies who died because there was no such thing as transposing blood for a baby who had an O positive mom and an O negative dad and was not able to mix those bloods together. Today we would just do a blood switch, or we could actually treat the mom earlier, but in those days before we had the evolution we have seen now, that baby would have died.

Perhaps members of our families who were in accidents or perhaps in surgeries died from lack of blood being available. It is not that we did not know we could transfuse it. It is not that we did not know it was possible. We had learned that during the war, and actually before that, but there just was not enough. It was not available or the right kind was not available.

We have come a very long way in the last years since the mid-1940s, but what is the current situation today? Let us look at this. We have 192 countries and many provinces that have blood donor days. We celebrate that, but I do not know if everybody truly understands it, because for us in Canada it is a resource that has always been there for us.

In most hon. members' memories, I would think, it has always been there. We have not had to buy it. We certainly do not get money for selling it, as happens in some countries that are actually quite close to us, so we have almost taken it for granted as something that will be there when we need it, but there will be people for whom it will not be there when they need it, particularly when we look at the large scope of what blood products actually are.

Private Members' Business

I do not know if people really appreciate how little blood people have and how much is used during some major surgeries. Others have referred to this. If one has five litres of blood circulating in the blood system, and if someone has a liver transplant, and I am using a more traumatic event to talk about, one needs 100 litres of blood for the transplant. That means all the blood in the bodies of 60 people is needed for one liver transplant.

I do not think that people understand the full scope of what it takes and the amount of blood it takes to provide quick, efficacious and safe treatment for people who may require a blood transfusion. I have certainly seen this in my own community. When we think that blood is reasonably available, it does not mean that every type is reasonably available.

Can we get O positive most of the time? Sure. Can we get O negative? Sure, but when we start to get into the rarer blood types, it is quite possible for it not to be available even now, particularly if we live in a rural area where there may not be a big enough local population base and blood has to be transported. Certainly that is done, but it does not mean that it is immediately available for everybody.

If our current situation is that only 4% of our eligible population donate blood, that does not mean 4% of all people, so that is a very large load for 4% of the population to carry. If we were to ask 308 people in the House when they last gave blood, I do not know what the answer would be. If every one of us in the House who is eligible to give blood were to commit to do that on a regular basis, what a difference even that would make. What a wonderful commitment that would be. That would be a real celebration of blood donor day on June 14 if the House committed to do that, but this needs a much bigger population than 4% of us.

It becomes a part of everybody's minds when we hear the ad on the radio saying that the long weekend is coming up, particularly in the nice weather, the May 24 weekend and the weekends of July 1 and August 1. The ads say more blood is needed on those weekends because more people will be on the road and there will be more accidents. There is a little surge of people who go in to donate because the ad on the radio has reminded them that they may be able to help. They go in and donate blood, but they do not make it part of their annual routine or every three months or whatever works for people, and that is really what we need to happen.

That is the current situation.

The other thing I would be very concerned about is that we have people who are waiting unconscionable lengths of time for surgery. I would be absolutely appalled if somebody with a rare blood type had to wait a long time for surgery and suddenly the blood needed was not available. I cannot even imagine what that would do to somebody. That would not happen with a more typical blood type, of course.

Another point that we do not always understand is that bone marrow is considered part of blood donation. It is not that we go in and donate bone marrow, but we do sign up. In the community that the member for Newton—North Delta and I come from, we have had major challenges around bone marrow transplants, because there has

to be a registry that is large enough to support a very mixed population in Canada today.

That is great, because we have a very textured and wonderful mix of people, but that means people have not in any way been able to find a bone marrow match. We have had several instances of this in the community of Surrey. People from the South Asian community or the Chinese community, particularly children who have a mom and a dad with different ethnic backgrounds, often find it much harder to get a bone marrow match if there is no family match. People die every day because they cannot find a bone marrow match. We see it on TV. We read those stories.

This legislation would allow a much bigger registry. It does not mean that all those people would then put up their hands if they were called and say that of course they would give bone marrow, because that is a very serious decision, but at least there would be more people to ask for that little four year old who is lying in hospital. Her mom and dad and her sisters and her brothers have no idea what will happen and are totally unable to do anything. Anybody who has children knows how powerless it would feel to watch one's child and know there is not a single solitary thing one can do to find a blood donor or a bone marrow donor and find them fast.

• (1840)

Declaring the week of June 14 as national blood donor week is incredibly important, but only if action comes with it, action around awareness. I am not sure that everyone knows the things we have talked about in the House today. We have to get more of that information out.

We have to at least get the information out to younger people. When I go into a blood donor clinic, and I am stereotyping a bit here and it is not to say that everybody who gives blood is older, but I think there are a number of people who have been donating blood for 20 to 30 years. They remember when blood was not always readily available.

As with any kind of education program, we have to start with younger people so they understand. Nobody is asking high school students to give blood, but surely we should be talking about it so that when they are older they will be able to make that decision for themselves.

As others have said, I am not sure everybody realizes as well the number of volunteers who are involved in the collection of blood.

I am pleased to stand and support all of my colleagues in having the week of June 14 declared national blood donor week.

Mr. Ken Boshcoff (Thunder Bay—Rainy River, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when I have a chance to talk to students who are ready to change the world, I ask them if they think saving three lives a week would be a good start. In spite of all the altruistic talk, few take up the challenge, so I will use this forum to give every young person the chance to save three lives this week, and it is free.

Thunder Bay's Plasma Centre is operated by the Canadian Blood Services and has been seeing a refreshing increase in the number of young people becoming plasma donors. I offer this as an opportunity to anyone who wants to change the world or who wants to make a difference.

Private Members' Business

People may ask how many times I have donated. I am proud to say it has been 351 times, which is the approximate equivalent of 1,000 lives. I hear tons of excuses and some are valid, but tell me why people who are healthy would not want to save three lives this week or next week. It should be a very formidable reason, perhaps their health or some other rather excusable reason.

Canada's system of volunteers, those who commit a mere one and a half hours a week, are the backbone of our society. They are people who care about others. That is a standard by which Canadians should benchmark themselves.

People may not be aware that they can give plasma every six days, platelets every two weeks, and whole blood five times a year, but no matter what they do, it helps, particularly those with rare blood types. It is my belief that if people hope to receive blood products after an accident or operation, then they should acknowledge today that it is a two way street. It is not a bank for withdrawals only. People have to make deposits. How could people just assume that someone else will provide the blood for them? It just cannot be done on a one way effort.

The awareness level must be ramped up. We need to do much more to let people know they have such a responsibility, a duty even. Would anyone want a family member to die from lack of blood? As serious as that scenario may be, it could happen if supplies are not continually replenished.

People should not donate out of simple fear that they should donate. They should do it because they know they can help, that they care, that they will make a difference, that the lives they save will also help make a difference. I am asking for unanimous all party support to hasten this bill through the House.

We, indeed, are fortunate in Canada to have such a fine, safe and dependable system. Those who donate know that the professionals who operate the centres are simply the best staff and professional people anyone could really ask for.

In the House of Commons there is a big debate about whether the ice water that runs through the veins of politicians is valid and would be accepted. The best thing for members to do is to go to Canadian Blood Services or the Quebec operations to be examined to see if they can or cannot donate. When it all shakes down, this is what one person can do to help many others.

These two organizations, Héma-Québec and Canadian Blood Services, are not for profit. I reiterate that it is one of the safest blood systems in the world. We are fortunate even to have such a system. Our neighbours to the south operate in a much different system. In many cases it is cash per pint, which would make me very nervous.

● (1845)

The fact that half of all of us will require blood or blood products for ourselves or a family member in our lifetime, that inevitable statistic should motivate us enough to walk down the street, hop in the car, or take the bus to the blood donor clinic and take some time for other people. When we look at 4% of the population, even if we assume that 50% of people because of past illnesses or problems with their immune system cannot donate, that still leaves out of half of the Canadians, 46% who should be healthy enough to do it.

We talked about bone marrow, platelets, plasma and whole blood. The range of opportunity is there. As a regular plasma donor, the Ottawa centre calls me to give platelets. Because I try to give plasma as often as I can, I have a more difficult time donating platelets. However, even when we travel to other centres, we will always see Canadian Blood Services or Héma-Québec offering a clinic and we could take some time to drop in and donate.

That awareness of becoming a blood donor and helping other people should be our inspiration. We do not do it for the money. We do it because we are kind and generous as Canadians. The thousands of people who donate on a regular basis should be recognized, not necessarily because blood donors want a pat on the back or that type of recognition, but because I believe they want others to be inspired enough to take an hour and a half once a week, or every couple of weeks, or every few months, to come out and help.

The World Health Organization declared June 14 as World Blood Donor Day. Canadians should strongly support this bill, and I believe they will. Let us do everything we can to encourage people, especially young people, to make that commitment early in their lives so that it becomes a habit, part of their daily or weekly routine, for example, that Thursdays are their plasma donor days or whatever. Let us encourage them to make it part of their lifestyle of caring and helping to save lives.

I encourage all members of the House to unanimously endorse a national blood donor week.

● (1850)

Mr. Patrick Brown (Barrie, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to announce my support to designate the second week of June as national blood donor week.

It is easy to say Canadians are lucky to have access to some of the safest blood in the world. Instead, I would like to acknowledge that it is not luck, but the kindness and generosity of a network of dedicated blood donors and volunteers who help to make this possible. A blood system is nothing without these generous individuals. It is the people whom we rely on when times are really tough. As such, it is important to celebrate and honour all blood donors and other volunteers who make the system work by creating national blood donor week.

Private Members' Business

The second week in June is significant not just because it marks the launch of summertime in Canada when blood donations traditionally decline, but because it also marks the World Health Organization's World Blood Donor Day on June 14th. Canada can join other nations and millions of people and organizations around the world to celebrate blood donors, raise awareness of the need for a safe supply of blood, and increase voluntary blood donation around the world by declaring the second week of June national blood donor week.

One significant reason Canada's blood supply is safe, and all the more reason to celebrate by creating national blood donor week, is that it is 100% donor supplied. According to the World Health Organization, less than 50% of blood collected in developing countries comes from voluntary donation. Instead, the majority comes from paid donors or obligatory blood replacement from the family members of transfusion patients.

The Pan American Health Organization recognizes that voluntarily donated blood is significantly safer than blood donated for payment or replacement. According to this organization, blood for payment or replacement is 40 times more likely to be infected with hepatitis C and 175 times more likely to be infected with HIV, the virus that causes AIDS. The celebration of Canada's blood donors, coordinated with World Blood Donor Day, sets a positive example worldwide.

Many countries in the Americas where just 30% of their blood is voluntarily donated look in awe to Canada, wondering how we can do it. The simple answer is the kindness and generosity of our volunteers. This is all the more reason why I support the designation of the second week in June as national blood donor week.

Acknowledging and thanking Canada's blood donors via a national blood donor week would serve as an example of best practices to nations around the world that want and need their own safe blood systems. It would also keep our system going.

The Government of Canada serves its citizens, including those close to each of us whom we love and cherish dearly, by encouraging existing donors to keep rolling up their sleeves and prospective donors to start. Declaring national blood donor week says to the people of Canada that this is important. This one small act of donating blood, this snippet of time, makes a huge difference in each of our lives.

As good as our system is, a national blood donor week would help it get even better. Although one unit of blood can potentially save three patients, the average patient needs 4.6 units for treatment. Existing rates of blood donation at less than 4% falls short of what Canadian patients need. At least 5% of Canadians need to donate in order to satisfy existing demand.

Furthermore, in all likelihood our aging population and national commitment to improved access to surgeries will mean an increased need for blood. An increased need for blood means an increased need for blood donors. The creation of a national blood donor week would help achieve that goal by telling Canadians that donating blood is a safe thing to do and the right thing to do.

I ask that all my colleagues show their appreciation for Canada's blood donors by voting in favour of Bill S-214.

I note that I received two emails from my own riding: one from a young girl, Lynne Waddington, who had created a facebook and she had hundreds of her friends pledge to give blood, and also one from our MPP Joe Tascona, who is actually organizing a blood donor clinic himself. These are typical of the volunteers we are seeing across Canada.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill and celebrate the many great volunteers we have across this country.

● (1855)

Mr. Rick Casson (Lethbridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise tonight and speak to Bill S-214 which is a very important bill before the House.

We do not very often stop to say thanks to the people that volunteer for almost everything that is needed in this country. No matter where we look or where we find a need, we can always find a person to fill that need. Certainly, blood donors are included in that group. If we take a week each year and call it national blood donor week, it is an appropriate thing to do.

I notice that the bill has been around for a while. It is now time that we dealt with it. I applaud the sponsor of the bill for bringing it forward in the House. We will see what happens to the bill as it goes on. It appears that most speakers tonight are in favour of the bill.

The blood system in Canada sometimes is in the news for some of the wrong reasons. In recent years it has been in the news for all the right reasons. Our blood system is a safe system. It is a system that meets the demand. I always remember when there is a long weekend approaching and people are expected to be injured on the highways that there is always a call that goes out to anyone who has not given blood in a while to go down to their blood donor clinic and donate. There is always a need and it reoccurs time and time again.

I also think of our troops, whether they are in Afghanistan or anywhere in the world and how they will require blood when they are injured. Canadians can help our troops by donating blood.

The whole idea that one donation of blood can be spread out and do so much for so many people is something I did not realize was possible until a few years ago. I thought that a pint of blood was a pint of blood. It is not. Canadian Blood Services processes the blood and use it for all types of treatment. Many people are helped through one donation.

The government is right in supporting Bill S-214 and it recognizes the importance in encouraging and promoting blood donations. Of course each donation has the potential to save a life.

Health Canada regulates the blood system and the products under the Food and Drugs Act to make sure that Canada's blood supply is safe. We have been down that road in the past and the government is very vigilant today that without the system being absolutely 100% safe, it is not of much value.

The demand for blood grows as our population grows and lifestyles change. There is always a need to continue promoting and making sure that people understand that donating blood is critically important.

In Canada blood is donated voluntarily. In some countries people are paid for donating a pint of blood. Here in Canada it is strictly voluntary. Donating blood is purely a selfless act and it should be recognized through any means.

The bill reads that the week where June 14 falls would be known as national blood donor week. Our party supports the bill. A national blood donor week would coincide also with World Blood Donor Day which is the second Tuesday in June around the world.

I have heard the comments in the House tonight and I believe that we are on the right track in taking this simple initiative to make sure that the thousands and thousands of people across Canada who donate blood on a regular basis are recognized. I must say that I am not one of those people who goes on a regular basis. My colleague from Rainy River is hanging his head. I have not donated on a regular basis and I should, and maybe some day that will happen.

I always tell the story of when I had a blood test when I got married, I hit the floor a couple of times. I do not know if that has anything to do with it. Certainly, lots of my friends and acquaintances have given blood over 50 times. That is a remarkable plateau to reach. I certainly appreciate the fact that they donate regularly.

• (1900)

I understand that another colleague here wants to say a few words. I will conclude my comments so that he may give his comments as well.

In closing, we support the bill. It is a great idea to recognize and just say thanks once a year to the people who give blood in this country.

Mr. David Sweet (Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Westdale, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to speak on Bill S-214. I would like to say that one of the things I have done in the past is support and sponsor blood donor clinics.

There is a need to encourage people to give blood, not only for the first time, as my colleague mentioned, but to continue the practice on a regular basis. It becomes more and more important.

One of the other aspects of this is that our world is becoming more dangerous. There are situations such as car collisions or cataclysmic weather or, God forbid, where there is a heinous criminal act and not one person but many people are hurt. To have this encouragement for people to get out to the blood donor clinics, and to have a good supply on hand if this kind of thing takes place, that is what we want to promote and encourage.

I join with the other members who have said they support the bill. I support it. As well, we must make sure that we do our best to encourage all of our constituents to get out to these clinics.

The Deputy Speaker: The time provided for the consideration of private members' business has now expired and the order is dropped to the bottom of the order of precedence on the order paper.

Adjournment Proceedings

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

[*English*]

AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

Mr. Ken Boshcoff (Thunder Bay—Rainy River, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am speaking today about a summer drought that became a winter drought and is now leading into a spring drought for the farmers of the Thunder Bay, Rainy River, Algoma and Kenora districts.

I realize that this drought is also affecting Peace River, Alberta, and Peace River, British Columbia, and southwestern Saskatchewan.

We know that the compounding of summer drought and a lack of snow over the winter has presented a whole series of problems.

The lack of snow cover has allowed for a deep penetration of ground frost. There has been a higher than normal winterkill of crops. The pasture land yields have been greatly reduced. Pasture weeds are likely to increase this summer. There has been increased soil erosion and it will continue.

Water levels in surrounding area lakes are also at record lows. Many local wells have low water levels. Indeed, people have had to truck in water.

There is also the revenue loss due to the reduction in the weight of the cattle, lower pregnancy rates in cows and inconvenient market timing for cattle sales.

There are increased capital costs for hauling, acquiring water, purchasing hay, purchasing replacement animals for breeding livestock, fencing new pasture land, digging new wells and installing new emergency pumps for livestock. Just the water needs alone for cattle are cumbersome and costly during times of drought.

Producers were forced to sell breeding livestock for \$200 to \$300 per animal last fall just to provide food and water for the remaining animals. This creates a significant net loss for farm producers, so they already have a shortage of cash, and they need the cash now for immediate costs like spring planting and the feeding and the purchasing of breeding livestock.

To compound all of this, there is an increased fire risk, and on top of all of it, there is the inconvenience and the impossibility of business planning for the coming year.

We can imagine the tremendous stress that has occurred. Help is needed.

Recently I received correspondence from the Minister of Agriculture and Food for Saskatchewan, who has requested of the federal government that funding be made immediately available in an on-farm livestock water development program to address producers' immediate needs for water access.

Adjournment Proceedings

I thank the minister for declaring the tax deferral on the drought-induced sales for those areas affected. It will help, but the problem now is so infrastructural, so deep and so widespread that federal intervention is required immediately.

Historically it has been the federal government that has taken the lead on these types of disasters, such as the ice storm or recently in Quebec the golden nematode for potato producers, with a disaster program that was not required to be cost shared.

I know that my fellow MPs from the other drought areas share my concerns. I know that the parliamentary secretary for agriculture said there was a lot of money, so now I must ask, when will the drought-stricken farmers receive theirs?

• (1905)

Mr. David Anderson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after 13 years of the Liberal government, the government is working hard to put in place a new set of programs for Canadian farmers that will address not only ongoing problems such as low farm income, but also address the extraordinary needs of producers that are created by things such as the droughts that we find in northwestern Ontario, Alberta, B.C. and southwestern Saskatchewan.

We are currently working to revise our business risk management programming to try to make it more responsive to the ongoing problems of high input costs that farmers face and the low commodity prices that often confront them. Officials are currently working, as the member knows, on the details of a separate disaster relief framework that will allow governments to respond more quickly to disasters, whether they be new diseases or natural disasters such as flooding or drought.

While CAIS remains in place for the 2006 program year, the government and its provincial partners have agreed, as a transitional measure, to implement under CAIS a number of key elements of a new stabilization program. This will allow producers to benefit from these program enhancements as soon as possible.

The government has also recently announced an additional \$1 billion in two initiatives for farmers. We will soon be making a payment of up to \$400 million to help offset the high cost of production faced by producers over the last few years. We have also earmarked a one time payment of up to \$600 million to kickstart the new government producer savings account style program that will be put in place with the agreement of the provinces. To tie it to the savings accounts, the government has also committed another \$100 million annually to address high production costs when they occur.

I think the member understands and realizes that the government is committed to agriculture and has been putting a large amount of money toward it.

It is essential in a sector such as agriculture, which is characterized by joint jurisdictions between the federal and provincial governments, that we develop and implement these programs in a collaborative manner with the provinces and industries so that everyone is committed to the success of the programs.

One of the frustrations has been that as we have gone forward to try to convince the government that there is an issue here, that there

is a drought that has taken place and that the government needs to respond, my own provincial government has been very reluctant to even admit that there is any sort of an emergency situation. While I am down here trying to say that we do have an emergency situation, we have a drought situation, the Saskatchewan government itself is saying that it does not really recognize that there is an emergency situation. This makes it much more difficult for me to represent my area and, if the same thing is happening to the hon. member opposite, I know it makes it much more difficult for him to represent his folks as well.

The Saskatchewan government has played with this issue since last summer. I know that the provincial minister has come out with a number of what he would call different suggestions, but what I have seen are just delay tactics. He suggested at one point that we should probably go to a 70-30 split. He told some of my producers that in meetings and then went public and said that we should do a 90-10 split. If anything is going to happen, it looks like it will be a 100-0 split. It is frustrating dealing with a provincial government that will not even recognize that we have an issue.

We will try to continue working with the provinces and territories to bring in these programs that are predictable, responsible and bankable and that deal with these emergency situations.

Mr. Ken Boshcoff: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the response but I do not appreciate the opening cheap shots. However, I had almost that entire response several months ago.

I was hoping that, through a cooperative exercise, that we, as a federal Parliament, could address this need, which is really in four provinces: Alberta, British Columbia, Saskatchewan and Ontario. As opposed to trying to blame someone else, it is the farmers who are left waiting for us to make a decision. As the process works its way through, now that we are getting into spring planting, decisions need to be made in terms of breeding stock and those kinds of things.

This question has been raised in the House many times. The minister himself said that the cabinet was working on prospects to address the drought areas in southwestern Saskatchewan, Peace River and northern Ontario, and I would take him at his word as a sincere person.

It is now the end of April and decisions for the farm communities in all those areas are rapidly coming to a decision time. The fact that in the areas that I have mentioned only one has had some measure of environmental relief through proper rainfall, means that the rest of them are quite stricken, and I ask—

• (1910)

The Deputy Speaker: The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board.

Adjournment Proceedings

Mr. David Anderson: Mr. Speaker, I have no intention of taking cheap shots or blaming anybody for this issue. I am just trying to lay out the facts as I have crossed paths with the provincial government on this issue.

As with any initiative, when working with partners we need to ensure that the provinces are in agreement with the strategy that we adopt and that we have adopted the best possible approach to the targets that we are trying to hit. Once a disaster framework is in place, with cost sharing established and criteria finalized, governments will be more responsive to unforeseen and unavoidable disasters in the farming sector.

In the meantime, we have been discussing with the provinces the need for disaster assistance to help those facing extraordinary costs due to the drought of 2006. The member needs to realize that it is important to have provincial participation in any assistance as we move forward toward implementing a disaster relief framework for the long term. As such, we will continue to work with the affected provinces to see if and how assistance should be made available for those most seriously affected by the drought of 2006.

MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY

Mr. Wayne Marston (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, NDP): Mr. Speaker, sadly, I rise today to follow up on a question I asked in the House before about our manufacturing sector.

Hamilton Speciality Bar is a plant in Hamilton East—Stoney Creek. As it sounds from the name, it is a plant that specializes in auto parts and very high quality workmanship. It will be throwing 300 workers out of work in just a few short weeks. The jobs in this plant were decent, union scale jobs, with good wages for the people to raise their families and purchase properties in our community. Third generation people are working in this plant. They are losing their jobs because the government has failed them.

Canada's manufacturing sector is in crisis. In Hamilton in the last year we have lost 11,000 jobs, primarily because of high energy prices, a high dollar and a worsening trade deficit with countries in Asia. It has caused many plants to reduce their output, or to layoff workers, or to close altogether. The value of Canada's manufacturing capital has declined since 2000 because business investment has been unable to even keep up with depreciation.

In the period November 2002 to April 2004, we lost 17,000 jobs in Ontario. However, between the period of April 2004 and February this year, we lost 124,000 jobs.

The government likes to talk about net job creation. In fact, it does create some jobs, but most of those are in other sectors that are low paying or part time jobs. One of the important assets we get from value added manufacturing jobs is they sustain a high number of well paid jobs in our community.

Recently, a delegation, headed by the Canadian Labour Congress, met with our Prime Minister and the Minister of Labour, the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Industry. It asked that we immediately implement a buy Canadian procurement policy and that the government tie such a policy to all and any federally funded municipal or provincial infrastructure investments. This would have an immediate impact on the manufacturing sector.

We do not see anything coming from the government in the sense of a strategy. For example, in British Columbia, when it saw it was in trouble a number of years ago, it created the position of a jobs commissioner. My understanding is that of the 125,000 jobs at risk, over 75,000 jobs were saved. There was a significant improvement over what it faced.

Now Canadians across the country, who work in the manufacturing sector, are very concerned. We have another trade deal looming over our heads potentially with Korea. What will that lead to?

To be very clear, we need a strategy in our country that protects jobs in our value added manufacturing sector. What new news can we get from the government today?

• (1915)

Mr. Colin Carrie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry, CPC): Mr. Speaker, just over a year ago Canadians voted for change. They recognized that the previous government was stale, that it had no vision and that it could not measure up to the expectation of Canadians.

Under the Liberal rule, Canada's manufacturers were competing with an anchor around their necks, high commodity and energy prices and increasing competition from low cost countries. Worse still, their government was not listening. Leading voices in industry, academia and labour, as well as business analysts were sounding the alarm of a crisis in our manufacturing sector, a call for help that went unheeded, like the calls from the member's constituency.

Canada's new government has stepped up to the plate and hit the ball out of the park. We delivered on the right conditions for manufacturers and Canadians to succeed on the world stage.

We started with our tax reduction measures in budget 2006. We eliminated the capital tax, reduced corporate and small business tax rates and confirmed the elimination of the corporate surtax, allowing Canada to regain a solid 5.1% statutory tax rate advantage over the United States of manufacturing income by 2010. That budget included 29 tax cuts, a clear signal that this government was serious about creating a supportive business environment that promotes competitiveness and innovation.

In November we announced our strategic economic plan. Advantage Canada goes to the heart of addressing manufacturers' concerns. Simply put, this plan focuses on five advantages that will help firms, including manufacturers, succeed in global markets.

Adjournment Proceedings

There is a tax advantage that will continue to reduce taxes for all Canadians and establish the lowest tax rate on new business investment in the G-7. There is a fiscal advantage that will eliminate Canada's total government net debt in less than a generation. There is an entrepreneurial advantage that will reduce unnecessary regulation and red tape and lower taxes to unlock business investment. There is a knowledge advantage designed to create the best educated, most skilled and most flexible workforce in the world. There is an infrastructure advantage that will create a modern world-class infrastructure to ensure the seamless flow of people, goods and services across the country and across our borders.

We did not stop there. Budget 2007 delivers on the commitments that we set out in Advantage Canada. Most notably manufacturers will now be able to write off over an accelerated two year period all manufacturing and processing machinery and equipment bought before 2009.

Budget 2007 is touted by eminent Canadian business leaders and by manufacturers themselves as a winning budget for manufacturers. This comes after last year's budget was recognized as the best budget for manufacturers in five years.

Together, Advantage Canada and our budget measures add up to a foundation to establish a more competitive business environment, one that will help Canadian manufacturers become more agile, assist them in capitalizing on their knowledge advantage and ensure that they can compete in global markets.

Canadian manufacturers are responding already by investing in innovation and in the skills of its workforce. This government values the manufacturing sector. We will continue working with the industry to ensure the success and stability of Canadian workers, and the Canadian industry.

Mr. Wayne Marston: Mr. Speaker, I am just a little surprised. That sounded to me more like a TV commercial full of buzzwords.

Hamilton Specialty Bar, a plant in Hamilton, needed the government to step up to the plate. It needed both levels of

government, provincial and federal, to come together and come up with a strategy of loan guarantees or something that would help entice a buyer into that plant and it has received nothing.

In the response I did not hear anything around a buy Canadian policy for the goods and services of the government.

Mr. Colin Carrie: Mr. Speaker, we have stepped up to the plate. I have to question whether the member from Stoney Creek read the budget before he voted against it.

Furthermore, did the NDP know budget 2007 fulfilled most of the recommendations unanimously put forth by the industry committee, supported by the NDP critic, before the NDP voted against it? The hon. member voted against a budget that goes to the heart of addressing manufacturers' concerns. He voted against a two year writeoff for investments in machinery and equipment. He voted against ensuring we would develop an infrastructure that is second to none. He voted against reducing the regulatory burden. He voted against investing in our youth and workers.

The hon. member comes to this chamber to lecture the government about challenges facing the manufacturing industry and manufacturing jobs. He should be ashamed of himself. This government led by our Prime Minister provided one of the best budgets ever for manufacturers and their workers.

It was the NDP members who voted against their industry critic's recommendations, voted against our manufacturing industry and voted against manufacturing jobs.

• (1920)

The Deputy Speaker: The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24 (1).

(The House adjourned at 7:20 p.m.)

CONTENTS

Tuesday, April 24, 2007

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

Government Response to Petitions

Mr. Lukiwski 8585

Committees of the House

Citizenship and Immigration

Mr. Doyle 8585

Status of Women

Ms. Ratansi 8585

Petitions

Age of Consent

Mr. Benoit 8585

Questions on the Order Paper

Mr. Lukiwski 8585

Points of Order

Comments by Member for Edmonton—Mill Woods— Beaumont—Speaker's Ruling

The Speaker 8585

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

Business of Supply

Opposition Motion—Greenhouse Gas Reduction Target

Mr. Bigras 8586

Motion 8586

Mr. Tonks 8588

Ms. Thibault (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les
Basques) 8589

Mr. Warawa 8589

Mr. Bigras 8590

Mr. McGuinty 8591

Mr. Harvey 8591

Mr. Bigras 8592

Mr. Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley) 8593

Mr. McGuinty 8593

Mr. Bigras 8596

Mr. Bevington 8596

Mr. Tonks 8597

Mr. Williams 8597

Mr. Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley) 8597

Mr. Bigras 8600

Mr. Tonks 8600

Ms. Nash 8601

Mrs. DeBellefeuille 8601

Ms. Thibault (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les
Basques) 8603

Mr. Bigras 8603

Mr. Laframboise 8603

Amendment 8604

Mr. Bigras 8605

Mr. Fitzpatrick 8605

Mr. Blaney 8605

Mr. Bigras 8607

Mr. Jean 8607

Mr. Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley) 8609

Mr. McGuinty 8609

Mr. Lussier 8609

Mr. Ouellet 8610

Mr. Carrier 8612

Ms. Thibault (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les
Basques) 8612

Mr. Godfrey 8612

Mr. Rodriguez 8612

Mr. Warawa 8614

Mr. Ouellet 8614

Ms. Thibault (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les
Basques) 8614

Mr. Godfrey 8614

Mr. Angus 8616

Mr. Warawa 8616

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Special Olympics

Mr. Harris 8616

Baha'i Festival

Mr. Wilfert 8617

Danielle Allard and Léon Rivard

Mr. Paquette 8617

Ontario Municipal Board

Mr. Angus 8617

Pembroke Lumber Kings

Mrs. Gallant 8617

St. Lawrence Seaway

Mr. Maloney 8618

Israel

Mr. Gourde 8618

Alexandre Morin

Ms. Gagnon 8618

Nigeria Election

Mr. Obhrai 8618

National Volunteer Week

Mr. Patry 8618

Immunization Awareness

Mr. Fletcher 8619

Public Safety Officers

Ms. Davies 8619

Armenia

Mr. Karygiannis 8619

The Armenian People

Ms. Demers 8619

Israel	
Mrs. Kadis	8619
Rail Safety	
Mr. Preston	8620

ORAL QUESTIONS

Afghanistan	
Mr. Ignatieff	8620
Mr. Harper	8620
Mr. Ignatieff	8620
Mr. Harper	8620
Mr. Ignatieff	8620
Mr. Harper	8621
Ms. Robillard	8621
Mr. Harper	8621
Ms. Robillard	8621
Mr. O'Connor	8621
Mr. Duceppe	8621
Mr. Harper	8621
Mr. Duceppe	8621
Mr. Harper	8621
Mr. Bachand	8621
Mr. O'Connor	8622
Mr. Bachand	8622
Mr. O'Connor	8622
Mr. Layton	8622
Mr. Harper	8622
Mr. Layton	8622
Mr. Harper	8622
Mr. Coderre	8622
Mr. O'Connor	8622
Mr. Coderre	8622
Mr. O'Connor	8622
Mrs. Redman	8622
Mr. O'Connor	8623
Mrs. Redman	8623
Mr. O'Connor	8623
The Environment	
Mr. Bigras	8623
Mr. Baird	8623
Mr. Bigras	8623
Mr. Baird	8623
Mrs. DeBellefeuille	8623
Mr. Baird	8623
Mrs. DeBellefeuille	8623
Mr. Baird	8623
Afghanistan	
Ms. Marleau	8624
Mr. O'Connor	8624
Ms. Marleau	8624
Mr. O'Connor	8624
Mr. Dosanjh	8624
Mr. O'Connor	8624
Mr. Dosanjh	8624
Mr. O'Connor	8624

The Environment	
Mr. Allison	8624
Mr. Baird	8624
Mr. Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley)	8624
Mr. Baird	8624
Mr. Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley)	8625
Mr. Baird	8625
Mr. Godfrey	8625
Mr. Baird	8625
Mr. Godfrey	8625
Mr. Baird	8625
Aboriginal Affairs	
Mr. Merasty	8625
Mr. Prentice	8625
Mr. Merasty	8625
Mr. Prentice	8626
Highway Infrastructure	
Mr. Bouchard	8626
Mr. Cannon	8626
Canada Lands Corporation	
Mr. St-Cyr	8626
Mr. Cannon	8626
Zimbabwe	
Mr. Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)	8626
Mr. MacKay	8626
Fisheries and Oceans	
Mr. Keddy	8626
Mr. Heam	8627
Automobile Industry	
Mr. Masse	8627
Mr. Emerson	8627
Mr. Masse	8627
Mr. Emerson	8627
Income Trusts	
Mr. Turner	8627
Mr. Van Loan	8627
Public Safety	
Mr. Petit	8628
Mr. Blackburn	8628
Armenia	
The Speaker	8628

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

Business of Supply	
Opposition Motion—Greenhouse Gas Reduction Targets	
Motion	8628
Mrs. Lavallée	8628
Mr. Ouellet	8629
Mr. Dhaliwal	8630
Mr. St-Cyr	8630
Mr. Wallace	8631
Mr. Bevington	8632
Mr. Paradis	8632

Mr. Ouellet	8634
Mr. Szabo	8634
Mr. Wallace	8634
Mr. Gourde	8635
Mr. Szabo	8636
Mr. Angus	8636
Mr. Ouellet	8636
Mr. Crête	8636
Mr. Hawn	8638
Mr. Warawa	8638
Mr. André	8639
Mr. Wallace	8640
Mr. Bigras	8640
Mr. Bevington	8641
Mr. Watson	8643
Mr. McGuinty	8643
Mr. Angus	8643
Mr. Wallace	8644
Mr. Warawa	8644
Mr. Blackburn	8644
(Amendment agreed to)	8646
Motion, as amended, agreed to	8647
Afghanistan	
Motion	8647
Motion negatived	8648

Canada Elections Act

Bill C-16. Motion for non-concurrence in Senate amendment	8648
Motion agreed to	8649

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

National Blood Donor Week Act

Mr. Bains	8649
Bill S-214. Second reading	8649
Mr. Dhaliwal	8651
Mr. Fletcher	8651
Ms. Gagnon	8652
Ms. Priddy	8653
Mr. Boshcoff	8654
Mr. Brown (Barrie)	8655
Mr. Casson	8656
Mr. Sweet	8657

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

Agriculture and Agri-Food

Mr. Boshcoff	8657
Mr. Anderson	8658

Manufacturing Industry

Mr. Marston	8659
Mr. Carrie	8659

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