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OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Thursday, June 19, 2008

—

Speaker: The Honourable Peter Milliken

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, June 19, 2008

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

●(1000)

[*English*]

WITNESS PROTECTION PROGRAM ACT

Hon. Stockwell Day (Minister of Public Safety, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the 2006-07 Witness Protection Program Act Annual Report that is prepared by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. It is being tabled in accordance with section 16 of the Witness Protection Program Act.

* * *

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 response to 13 petitions

* * *

TRADE AND INVESTMENT

Hon. Helena Guergis (Secretary of State (Foreign Affairs and International Trade) (Sport), CPC): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 32(2) I have the honour to table, on behalf of the Minister of International Trade, in both official languages, the report entitled "Canada's State of Trade, Trade and Investment Update—2008".

* * *

INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS

Hon. Mauril Bélanger (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the pleasure, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1), to present to the House, in both official languages, the report of the Canadian Parliamentary Delegation of the Canada-Africa Parliamentary Association respecting its participation in the Ninth Ordinary Session of the Pan African Parliament and the fact-finding mission to Zimbabwe, from May 5 to May 9, 2008.

In this report, for reasons of safety, the association has not been forthcoming with the details of the names of the individuals and groups we met. Anyone who reads the report will see that it is not like our usual report. Because of the situation in Zimbabwe currently, we did not want to further endanger individuals or groups who are involved in the presidential runoff elections that will be held at the end of this month.

* * *

●(1005)

EXCISE TAX ACT

Ms. Joyce Murray (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-572, An Act to amend the Excise Tax Act (no GST on bicycles, adult tricycles and related goods and services).

She said: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce my first bill as a member of Parliament, entitled An Act to amend the Excise Tax Act (no GST on bicycles, adult tricycles and related goods and services).

I would like to acknowledge and thank my hon. colleague for Charlottetown for his assistance and for seconding this bill.

The best way to encourage a shift in behaviour is to provide incentives. By removing the GST on bicycles and bicycle-related goods, accessories and services, we can promote their use as one of the most environmentally sound, healthy and affordable forms of transportation and recreation.

This bill is part of a much larger course of action that must be taken to shift taxes off those things we want more of, such as clean transportation, and onto those things we want less of, such as pollution.

This is a green shift that we as Canadians must make as we work to reduce the risks of climate change. As someone who has personally experienced the many benefits of bicycling to work regularly, I am proud to introduce this bill and I hope my hon. colleagues will join me in supporting it.

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

[*Translation*]

The Speaker: Does the hon. member for Gatineau wish to raise a point of order?

Mr. Richard Nadeau: Mr. Speaker, it is only to say that there is no interpretation into French.

The Speaker: I will take a moment to ensure that the interpretation is working. Is it okay? Yes, it is working.

Routine Proceedings

[English]

ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES READJUSTMENT ACT

Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-573, An Act to change the name of the electoral district of Western Arctic.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to introduce this bill, which would change the name of my riding from “Western Arctic” to “Northwest Territories”, just as for the Yukon Territory, the riding is referred to as Yukon, and with Nunavut, the riding is referred to as Nunavut.

After division in 1999, the change of the riding name did not occur for the Northwest Territories. This is a real problem for many people in considering where this riding is. The name of the riding has no relationship to the riding itself. It certainly is not respectful of the great territory of the Northwest that I represent. I would really like to see this name change occur. I have consulted with my constituents over the past year to ensure that they are supportive of the name change and have seen that they are. This would be a good change.

The name of the Northwest Territories is historic and important in Canada. Many of the provinces—

Hon. John Baird: I support this. I'm with you.

Mr. Dennis Bevington: Mr. Speaker, can I get unanimous consent for the bill?

The Speaker: Order. The motion is deemed adopted. When shall the bill be read a second time?

Some hon. members: Now.

The Speaker: Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Speaker: There is no consent.

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

• (1010)

Mr. Lee Richardson: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order to ask for the unanimous consent of the House to return to presenting reports from committees.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mr. Lee Richardson (Calgary Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the fifth report of the Standing Committee on International Trade, entitled “Human Rights, The Environment and Free Trade with Colombia”.

Although there was not unanimity in the passing of this report in committee, I think it fairly represents the testimony of more than 50

witnesses here and in Colombia. It is a pleasure and honour to present this to the House.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Wayne Marston (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I move that the seventh report of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development, presented to the House on Tuesday, June 17, be concurred in.

This morning I will be sharing my time with my good friend from Windsor—Tecumseh.

On March 11 of this year, at the Subcommittee on International Human Rights, I moved a motion to review the case of Omar Khadr and to report to the foreign affairs committee with recommendations to the government.

I did so for no political points, as has been suggested by the government. I did so because the handling of this case is so fundamental to Canadians' sense of what is just and their expectations that Canada will assume its responsibilities under the international covenants it signs.

As we know, the foreign affairs committee has tabled the subcommittee's report with the addition of the government's dissenting opinion.

At my first intervention in the committee, I said the fact that Omar Khadr's country has not given him the help that all Canadian citizens deserve is absolutely unacceptable. Omar Khadr was a boy, a child soldier of 15 years of age, when he was shot twice in the back and almost executed by American special forces.

Since that time, he has been held as a prisoner in Guantanamo Bay. While in custody, Omar has had to cope with what the American government refers to as enhanced interrogation techniques. For the past six years at Guantanamo, he has been held with adult detainees, and now Omar faces the very real possibility of a life sentence.

I have some quotes I would like to bring to this House from the committee report. They are from public testimony in our committee.

As was reported, Senator Roméo Dallaire said that:

Canada is heading down a slippery slope by failing to obey the United Nations conventions on child soldiers to which it is a signatory....

Senator Dallaire went on to say:

—the minute you start playing with human rights, with conventions, and with civil liberties in order to say you're doing it to protect yourself...you are no better than the guy who doesn't believe in them at all.

Former prosecutor David Crane, who was the Sierra Leone prosecutor for the United Nations, testified that he believes Khadr should be treated as a child soldier. Mr. Crane also said that he thought it important to bring Khadr back “and have his case fairly and openly considered in Canada”. Mr. Crane went on to testify further that “any child...just doesn't have the requisite mental capability to choose this particular situation, regardless of whether they volunteer or not”.

Routine Proceedings

Democracy is a very, very fragile thing and often Canadians fail to realize this point. Perhaps that is because to get our Constitution all we had to do was write a nice letter to the Queen. Veterans of Canada's wars will tell us very quickly what the costs are of protecting and sustaining our democracy.

Our military forces in Afghanistan are tasked with enhancing the conditions under which a democracy might flourish there. Is it not ironic that a government with Canadian troops fighting in Afghanistan to protect the rights of the Afghani people will not protect the rights, under United Nations covenants, of Omar Khadr?

Recently released internal reports from Canadian officials say that Omar Khadr is "a good kid" and that he has not been radicalized. According to these reports, Mr. Khadr understands that he is in Guantanamo because of his family.

At this point, I would like to reiterate the committee's recommendations.

The committee recommended "that the Government of Canada demand the immediate termination of Military Commission proceedings against Omar Khadr".

The committee expressed "its objection to the position stated by the United States that it reserves the right to detain Omar Khadr as an 'enemy combatant', notwithstanding an acquittal or the possible termination of proceedings".

The committee recommended "that the Government of Canada demand Omar Khadr's release from US custody at Guantanamo Bay to the custody of Canadian law enforcement officers as soon as practical".

The committee called "on the Director of Public Prosecutions to investigate, and, if warranted, prosecute Omar Khadr for offences under Canadian [criminal] law".

The committee went on to recommend "that the Government of Canada take such measures as are necessary to ensure that possible security concerns are appropriately and adequately addressed upon the repatriation of Omar Khadr".

The committee called on "the Government of Canada to take appropriate measures that are consistent with Canada's obligations under Article 7 of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict and with Canadian law".

●(1015)

In particular, the subcommittee called on "the relevant Canadian authorities to ensure that an appropriate rehabilitation and reintegration program is developed for Omar Khadr, which takes into account legitimate security concerns. To the extent necessary, such a program could place judicially enforceable conditions on Omar Khadr's conduct".

Mr. Khadr's military lawyer, Lieutenant Commander Kuebler, has stated that "he would like to see Omar go from Guantanamo Bay to some situation in Canada where he has access to the rehabilitative services he needs to eventually transition and adjust and become a functioning member of society".

Mr. Khadr's legal representative in Canada has put together a plan for his reintegration into Canadian society.

The proposed plan includes psychiatric treatment at the Toronto Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, religious counselling from an imam and a tiered integration program that would see Khadr closely monitored for as long as four years.

I submit to the House that Omar Khadr is salvageable. All he wants from his country, from his government, is another chance. Witness after witness at the subcommittee on human rights have said that Canada must petition the United States to repatriate Omar Khadr to Canada.

The Supreme Court has said that Omar Khadr's rights have been violated. The Supreme Court of the United States has said that the rights of detainees in Guantanamo have been violated.

Canadian officials are saying that Omar Khadr is not a threat and, instead, is a victim of his upbringing.

After six years of two successive governments failing Omar Khadr, it is time for his government to do the right thing and to help this young man salvage the rest of his life.

I will close today with a question asked so many times in various forms in the House. When will the Prime Minister listen to the committee, listen to Canadians and petition the United States government to release Omar Khadr to Canada?

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Vivian Barbot (Papineau, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate my colleague on his speech about the fact that the government's behaviour toward Omar Khadr is beyond all comprehension.

I would like my colleague to explain what fate awaits Omar Khadr if he goes to military trial in Guantanamo. If he is repatriated, what would happen to him when he arrives here?

[*English*]

Mr. Wayne Marston: Mr. Speaker, I commend the hon. member for the work she has done on the foreign affairs committee, her assistance on this report and for her very valued judgment and opinions.

If Omar Khadr is convicted, there is a good chance that he will spend the rest of his life in an American prison, perhaps even a military prison, which would be even worse for the young man.

If he comes back to Canada, Omar Khadr has a chance to prove to the world that he is salvageable, that he was simply a child combatant, a victim of the circumstances and a victim, to some extent, of his own father and his father's aspirations.

It is very important that this young man be given the opportunity to save what is left of his life.

●(1020)

Mr. Joe Comartin (Windsor—Tecumseh, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Hamilton for allowing me to share his time.

The report goes to the fundamental reason we have democracy and elected governments. It also goes to our responsibility as members of Parliament and as government to protect our citizens.

Routine Proceedings

We have a responsibility to all of our citizens. We do not have the right to pick and choose. We cannot say, in the case of Mr. Samson or Ms. Martin, that we will do whatever we can as a country to get them out of a prison in another country but then say that we will not do that for Mr. Khadr. That is not why we were sent here by our constituents.

We have a moral and legal responsibility to Mr. Khadr and these responsibilities are clear. These responsibilities should not come as a shock to the current government. Other countries like us, which have full democracies, have honoured these responsibilities since 9/11, since the start of the Afghanistan war. I am speaking of countries like England, France, Germany, and we could go down the list.

When those countries told the United States that they wanted their citizens back, those citizens who the U.S. had in custody, and which, by its own supreme court, was found to be illegal, unconstitutional and against international law, in every case the United States returned them and there were no repercussions.

The Conservative government sits in fear that somehow if it stands on its hind legs and tells the United States that it will do as it is supposed to do as a sovereign power in protecting its citizens and ask that Mr. Khadr be returned to Canada that there will be negative repercussions. The government does act from that fear and it continues to refuse to accept its responsibilities, both moral and legal.

We see that in the dissenting report. It just smacks of a lack of courage on the part of the government to do what it is supposed to do.

This is, by any international standard, a tragedy that has been allowed to go on for over six years. It was quite clear from the very beginning that Mr. Khadr was a child soldier. We were the leading country in pressing for an international protocol to protect children, whatever the colour of their skin, their religion or their families, from being used and abused as child soldiers.

All of the evidence in the Khadr case says that Omar Khadr suffered exactly that. He was used and abused by his family and by the system in Afghanistan but the Conservative government refuses to accept that reality. The evidence of that is absolutely overwhelming.

Instead, to the government's eternal shame, what we hear day after day, when Conservative members stand in the House during question period to respond to questions from all opposition parties about bringing Mr. Khadr home to have him treated here by both our criminal justice system and our health system, is the same old mantra.

● (1025)

What do the government members say? In essence, they say that he has been charged with serious crimes, which we have no issue with, but they do not mention the child soldier protocol. They say that we have been assured by the United States that he is being treated humanely, which is in direct contradiction to all the evidence that we have, and then they say that it is premature to do anything so they will not do anything. It flies in the face of all of the facts and all of their responsibilities.

The three opposition parties, in unison, have said that we must bring him home where we will deal with him here. The report capsulizes, in a very succinct form, what would happen if he were brought home. We have had a paper thin barrier thrown up that we cannot deal with him in our criminal justice system. That is absolutely false. There is overwhelming evidence from any number of constitutional and criminal law experts in Canada who say that we can deal with him.

We will deal with him and give him all the protection he is entitled to as a child soldier and as a juvenile. All the opposition parties are prepared to do that. I would say to the government that it should have some courage and do what it is supposed to do.

Both the supreme court in the United States and the Supreme Court in Canada have said that the military commission tribunal that has been set up at Guantanamo, Cuba, is illegal. They said that it has avoided its responsibilities under the American bill of rights and under our Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Even after two supreme court decisions in this case, the government continues to say that the system over there is a legitimate one. In complete contradiction to all the legal expertise from various high courts in this country and in the United States, the government still stands in this House and repeats those falsehoods. I do not know if that is out of ignorance, out of fear or out of politics in terms of trying to be friendly with the Bush administration, but that is the reality.

I will move off the legalities for a moment and talk about the politics of the situation. The administration is about to change in the United States. When we look at the sequence of events, it is quite clear that the Bush administration pulled the judge who was actually beginning to give some favourable decisions around disclosure and replaced him with another judge who has a reputation of just forcing matters through.

Both of the leading contenders for the presidency in the United States from both parties have called for the shutting down of Guantanamo. Senator Obama has specifically called for the end of the use of the military commissions. That is what will happen in January of next year. It is a complete repudiation by whoever will be the president next year. That is the politics in that country. We still have the Conservative government toeing the line for the Bush administration.

However, before that occurs, Mr. Khadr will be forced to trial by the judge who has just been appointed. Mr. Khadr's defence counsel have said very clearly that he will be convicted because everybody gets convicted in that system. The prosecution will be able to convict anybody for anything, including murder.

As a lawyer who has practised for a long time, I have looked at the evidence, whether it was in the criminal justice system in the United States or the criminal justice system in this country, and it is quite clear that Mr. Khadr would not be convicted of any serious criminal offence. There is simply no evidence. After five years of hearing these stories, when the real evidence began to come out, and the lack of it, it was quite clear that there was no evidence. Therefore, if he is moved into the criminal justice systems in either country, the regular ones, he would not be convicted of any serious crime.

Routine Proceedings

I want to say to the government that it should listen to the speeches today from all of the opposition parties and to, please, have the courage to do what it is supposed to do.

• (1030)

Hon. Karen Redman (Kitchener Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have listened with great interest to my friend and he has repeatedly talked about the fact that all three opposition parties would like to have Mr. Khadr brought back to the Canadian justice system and I totally agree with him.

He also mentioned about the government having courage. I do not think it is a lack of courage. I think that it is a fundamental ideologically driven decision by the government. It is sadly ironic in my view that we have Canadian men and women dying on Afghanistan soil, protecting the rights of the Afghanistan people, yet we have a government here that is not moving on the rights of a Canadian citizen.

I would make this caveat and this disclaimer that I am not a lawyer. I know my hon. friend is and I have served on many committees with him. I am wondering if he would speak a minute about the fact that the judge has been replaced in Mr. Khadr's case.

I think that is highly unusual and almost unprecedented in most judicial hearings in the absence of the fact that a judge became ill or something like that. There is also the fact that notes have been destroyed, which I think are very pertinent to the fair and due process that should be due Mr. Khadr who is facing these kinds of criminal charges.

We purport around the world that we have an independent judiciary. I would say the United States is probably second to none. As my hon. colleague pointed out in his speech, this has been deemed by the supreme court of the United States to be outside of the law.

I really do agree and wonder how the government can continue to be so entrenched in a position that is a departure from anything that we have done on the international stage, when indeed there are other democracies that have asked for their citizens to be repatriated. I too agree with the hon. member, and say I find this a very appalling situation and a new low for us as a country.

Mr. Joe Comartin: Mr. Speaker, on the first issue of whether it is courage or ideology, I can say to my friend that from some of the discussions that some of the other colleagues from the NDP and I have had with some of the members of Parliament of the Conservative Party, there are a certain number of them who think that we should be bringing him home. Therefore, it is not just ideology. It certainly does not permeate throughout the whole caucus of the Conservative Party.

With regard to the issue of the replacement of the judge, if we follow the sequence of events, for four to five years the military commission system basically was not functioning. The Americans then put one in place. They went into court and it was struck down because it did not have an appeal process. They passed more legislation to have the appeal process put into place.

When the judge who got in there was finally beginning to function, and I am sure they did not want him but he got in there, he began to provide some very basic limited rights to Mr. Khadr's

lawyers to get some disclosure. As that disclosure started to come out, as I said earlier, it became very clear that they did not have the evidence that they had told the country and the world that they had against Mr. Khadr. They just did not have it.

In fact, the American supreme court decision here forced disclosure out of our intelligence people, but as that began to come out, it became quite obvious they were going to have a hard time, so they replaced the judge. The judge had no intention to retire. He had been appointed to this file and he was going to carry it through to the end of the trial.

Therefore, it is quite obvious that they manipulated the system over there, always to the disadvantage of Mr. Khadr. It is another reason why the government should be acting.

Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from Windsor for his intervention and my colleague from Hamilton for his work on this file.

Recently, at the foreign affairs committee, we received the report and the committee voted in favour of the recommendations from the subcommittee on human rights. I am proud that we did so because one of the problems has been the government acknowledging its responsibility.

We have a system in Guantanamo that has fallen apart. The house of cards is falling. Our government needs to acknowledge that. We understand that this system is falling apart in Guantanamo. I want to know from my colleague why is it that our country is not able to do what Australia has done—

• (1035)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Andrew Scheer): Order. I will have to cut off the hon. member because the hon. member for Windsor—Tecumseh only has about 30 seconds to respond.

Mr. Joe Comartin: Mr. Speaker, it is not a question of ability to do anything. It is a question of the willingness, having the political courage to stand up and say we are going to do what we are supposed to do. The government very clearly would get a positive response from the United States. We know that.

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 move:

That the House do now proceed to orders of the day.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Andrew Scheer): Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Andrew Scheer): All those in favour of the motion will please say ye.

Some hon. members: Ye.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Andrew Scheer): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

Government Orders

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Andrew Scheer): In my opinion the nays have it.

And five or more members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Andrew Scheer): Call in the members.

And the bells having rung:

• (1110)

(The House divided on the motion which was agreed to on the following division:)

*(Division No. 161)***YEAS**

Members

Abbott	Ablonczy
Albrecht	Allen
Ambrose	Anders
Anderson	Baird
Bezan	Blackburn
Boucher	Brown (Leeds—Grenville)
Brown (Barrie)	Bruinooge
Calkins	Cannan (Kelowna—Lake Country)
Carrie	Casson
Chong	Clarke
Comuzzi	Davidson
Day	Dykstra
Epp	Fast
Finley	Fitzpatrick
Fletcher	Galipeau
Gallant	Goldring
Goodyear	Gourde
Grewal	Guergis
Hanger	Harvey
Hawn	Hearn
Hiebert	Hill
Hinton	Jaffer
Jean	Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)	Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Khan	Komarnicki
Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)	Lake
Lauzon	Lebel
Lemieux	Lukiwski
MacKay (Central Nova)	MacKenzie
Manning	Menzies
Merrifield	Miller
Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)	
Moore (Fundy Royal)	
Nicholson	Norlock
O'Connor	Obhrai
Oda	Paradis
Petit	Poilievre
Prentice	Preston
Rajotte	Reid
Richardson	Scheer
Shipley	Smith
Solberg	Sorenson
Stanton	Strahl
Sweet	Toews
Trost	Van Kesteren
Van Loan	Vellacott
Verner	Wallace
Warawa	Watson
Yelich — 95	

NAYS

Members

André	Angus
Asselin	Atamanenko
Bachand	Bains
Barbot	Bélanger
Bell (Vancouver Island North)	Bell (North Vancouver)
Bellavance	Bevington
Bigras	Bonsant
Bouchard	Bourgeois

Brunelle	Cardin
Carrier	Charlton
Chow	Coderre
Comartin	Crête
Crowder	Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley)
Davies	DeBellefeuille
Demers	Deschamps
Dewar	Dosanjh
Duceppe	Faille
Freeman	Gagnon
Godin	Gravel
Guimond	Jennings
Julian	Laforest
Laframboise	Lalonde
Lavallée	Layton
Lee	Lemay
Lessard	Lussier
Malo	Marleau
Marston	McDonough
McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)	Ménard (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin)
Mulcair	Nadeau
Nash	Ouellet
Pacetti	Paquette
Perron	Picard
Plamondon	Redman
Roy	Siksay
Silva	St-Cyr
Stoffer	Thi Lac
Tonks	Vincent
Wrzesnewskyj — 75	

PAIRED

Members

Batters	Blais
Devolin	Gaudet
Guay	Lévesque
Skelton	St-Hilaire
Thompson (Wild Rose)	Warkentin — 10

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

NUCLEAR LIABILITY AND COMPENSATION ACT

The House resumed from May 29 consideration of the motion that Bill C-5, An Act respecting civil liability and compensation for damage in case of a nuclear incident, be read the third time and passed, and of the motion that this question be now put.

The Speaker: Order. When this matter was last before the House, the hon. member for Western Arctic had the floor, and there remain five minutes in his time for debate on this matter. Accordingly, I call upon the hon. member for Western Arctic.

• (1115)

Ms. Libby Davies: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I believe that we should be returning to routine proceedings.

The Speaker: I am afraid the hon. member did not hear the motion. It was that we proceed to orders of the day, so we are on orders of the day. Routine proceedings are done.

Ms. Libby Davies: Mr. Speaker, I would seek unanimous consent to go back to routine proceedings. I believe that people were leaving the chamber and they did not hear the motion. There was a lot of noise and people did not hear what the motion was about, and we were standing. I would seek unanimous consent that we return—

Government Orders

The Speaker: I will ask. Is there unanimous consent to revert to routine proceedings?

Some hon. members: Yes.

Some hon. members: No.

The Speaker: No, so the hon. member for Western Arctic has the floor on debate.

Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP): Mr. Speaker, once again I stand to speak to Bill C-5, the Nuclear Liability and Compensation Act.

In my previous speech, which was about a month ago, I took the time to describe all the amendments that we proposed on this bill. Our concern is the impact on the ability of people to obtain compensation in the event of a nuclear accident. Much of the bill favours the nuclear industry over those who may be seeking compensation from the industry in the case of an accident or any kind of incident at a nuclear plant.

The nuclear industry is heating up in this country. There are proposals in two provinces in western Canada for nuclear reactors. The movement toward nuclear energy seems to be gaining some steam in the country, yet none of the basic issues that speak to the concerns Canadians have over the development of this industry have been addressed. There is still no plan for waste disposal. The roles of government and private industry in the nuclear industry have not been clarified. We still have not determined whether the nuclear industry is cost effective in this country. Over and over we have subsidized the development of nuclear energy. At the same time this bill does not give proper coverage and protection for the liability that could occur with a nuclear accident.

A \$650 million liability limit is the minimum possible for Canada to match with international agreements. We have said over and over that that is not good enough. The United States, our closest trading partner, carries liability far in excess of \$650 million for each plant in that country.

The Conservative government is moving ahead with a bill that does not adequately do the job. We have pointed that out over and over again. We have attempted to work with the government on amendments in committee and here in the House. We have been stonewalled by the government. We have been stonewalled by the official opposition as well. The Liberals have not shown much responsibility.

Hon. John Baird: Call them "the Liberal". There is only one of them here.

Mr. Dennis Bevington: Mr. Speaker, I cannot comment on people's attendance in the House of Commons. That is against the traditions of the House. I would hope hon. members would not encourage me to do that.

The Bloc is supporting this bill as well. This bill is a half-hearted attempt to set a proper liability limit. There is an attempt within the bill to provide many outs for companies in case of a requirement for compensation. It is difficult for private individuals to obtain the kind of compensation that would be necessary as a result of a nuclear accident.

It is simply not good enough to have time limits of three years or ten years in which people could expect to see an impact from nuclear accidents. We already know that 30 and 40 years later people are coming forward with health issues from nuclear accidents. People are bringing forward situations where nuclear material has been transported from one area to another and it ends up in housing units or it has been used for fill in some cases. These incidents eventually have an impact on people's lives.

• (1120)

When the limits within Bill C-5 are set to such a short term, it opens the door for companies to avoid being responsible. Of course that is good for the companies, that is good for the surety of the industry, but it is not good for Canadians. As a member of Parliament who has been elected by individual Canadians and not by companies, I am here to try to bring clarity to this bill as it impacts on Canadians. We are frustrated with trying to move forward with some very basic amendments to various terms within this bill for the past year and a half. It has been difficult.

We have seen with the Chalk River incident in December the importance of a strong nuclear safety agency. We have seen the necessity of ensuring that we protect Canadians, that we protect investment and that we protect the direction this country takes with nuclear energy.

There are many reasons not to support this bill. We will continue to debate it today and perhaps tomorrow, and if we can carry this through, this bill will remain unresolved for a few more months. Perhaps Canadians will have a chance to speak up and influence the government.

If the Conservative plan is to sell off Canada's nuclear industry and if this bill is simply to allow foreign companies to purchase the assets of AECL, this issue should be up front. Canadians should understand why we are doing the things we are doing in Parliament, but that is not the case. The government continues to move this bill forward in a fashion that suggests it is simply for other purposes.

Mr. Brian Fitzpatrick (Prince Albert, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I listened to part of the member's speech. I am not quite clear on this, but he seems to be opposed to any private ownership in the nuclear industry and he wants control retained by the government. Maybe he could clarify this. It was my impression that the New Democrats were absolutely opposed to any nuclear development, period, whether it was done by the government or by corporations. I would like that clarified. If that is the case, it seems to me there is a lot of sucking and blowing going on at the same time.

Mr. Dennis Bevington: Mr. Speaker, there are a number of issues my colleague raised. One of them is the position of the New Democratic Party on nuclear energy. Quite simply, nuclear energy is part of the Canadian energy mix. It exists now and will exist in the future. Our concern is to ensure the nuclear industry is operated in a safe fashion but also to ensure that the problems the nuclear industry has yet to address are addressed.

Government Orders

We have not seen a resolution of the problems that the nuclear industry has with waste. That has not happened, so why would this be seen as a good area to expand in and provide, as the Conservatives did in the last budget, \$300 million for the ACR-1000 nuclear reactor? We are not in favour of that. We are not in favour of continuing to subsidize an industry that has been in place for over 50 years.

The industry cannot get its act together to produce equipment at a price that matches that of its competitors, whether it be wind, solar, hydro, clean coal or anything else. If the industry cannot do that, why should the government support it? The government is deliberately subsidizing that industry and then it will turn around and sell it to the Americans. What kind of deal is that? That is simply a bad deal for Canada and for Canadians.

• (1125)

Mr. Alan Tonks (York South—Weston, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member is on so many committees, but I am not sure of whether he was at the natural resources committee when minister appeared before it.

Two issues were raised, the first issue being the \$600 million compensation cap that was placed through the legislation. I am not sure whether it was the member who asked the question, but the minister was asked why the government would put that cap on when a major nuclear incident would have such larger and more expansive implications geographically.

Is the member aware of what the answer was? What would the appropriate amount and mechanism be, if it were entrenched in the legislation, with which the New Democratic Party would be satisfied?

Mr. Dennis Bevington: Mr. Speaker, originally we were looking at the amount that was in place in the United States, our closest neighbour, of some \$10 billion in liability. The Americans have a system of sharing the liability among all the existing plants. A system like that in Canada probably would have been preferable to this minimum liability limit. That is exactly how it was portrayed by the minister when he was in the committee.

He said that this was the international minimum standard that the government would go with because it would be accepted by the international community. However, places like Germany, where it has experienced major problems with nuclear reactors, has an unlimited liability for anyone wanting to put one in place.

The reason why the government will not go in that direction is it would make it less attractive to sell AECL. There is a higher liability limit on the plants in Canada. The true costing of the nuclear industry would be more evident in the cost in insurance.

What we see is a compromise to keep the costs down for the nuclear industry. At the same time, the government, in this budget, is recklessly throwing more money into the industry.

We really have not had a national energy debate where we can match up one new form of energy against the old ones.

Hon. John Baird: We have a new national energy program this morning.

Mr. Dennis Bevington: Mr. Speaker, it is an interesting thing in Parliament that whenever one talks about the future, some tend to refer to the past. We need a debate on energy in Parliament. We need it now. We have \$140 a barrel oil. We have many choices in front of us and we have to make those choices in a reasonable fashion, with Canadians understanding all the costs.

Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Western Arctic because I know he has paid a huge amount of attention to this issue. Because of his riding and the interest there, he is one of the people in this place, and certainly within our caucus, who pays very close attention. I agree with his comments. We need a proper debate and a context in terms of a national energy policy.

We see these piecemeal attempts coming forward that do not give us any grounding or context in terms of what is going to happen in Canada. One of the concerns we have, and what we have heard from the community, is the fact that the Conservative government has big plans for the nuclear industry in Canada and that it has been offered as a solution to the question of greenhouse gases. We see this in Alberta with the oil sands. This is not an existing status quo and it puts a cap on things.

The question of civil liability and compensation for nuclear industry damage is looming. Not only is it a serious situation in the status quo, but also where it leads us in the future.

Could the member for Western Arctic reference that in terms of what we might possibly face in the future in the expansion of the nuclear industry in Canada, so the question of liability will become an even greater issue?

• (1130)

Mr. Dennis Bevington: Mr. Speaker, it is interesting when we talk about the expansion of the nuclear industry. Peace River is looking at a huge 4,000 megawatt plant. That is probably linked into the plans to develop transmission capacity in Alberta to Montana and on into the United States. Perhaps, if we look at it in a longer sense, what we would do is provide an opportunity in Alberta to develop nuclear energy, without the kind of safeguards and liability that the United States has, and then export that power to the United States.

In some sense, that project is still much in doubt. Saskatchewan has suggested that it would like to look at a nuclear reactor. I think what is driving this is its understanding now that clean coal with sequestration is an enormously expensive process, and it is going to get cold feet on that pretty quickly too.

The Conservative government threw a quarter of a billion dollars toward this project and the Saskatchewan government threw in \$750 million. The industry has only put \$300 million. They are going to produce a 100 megawatt clean coal sequestration plant in Saskatchewan. My goodness, that will never be cost effective. Therefore, perhaps they are going to the nuclear reactors because they do not see this is going to be, in the long term, a very attractive potential.

What we have not done is put it in context. If we do not do that, people will continue to propose projects and look at things in the short term, which may make no sense at all in the long term.

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Mr. Joe Comartin (Windsor—Tecumseh, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Bill C-5, the so-called nuclear liability bill is an obvious misnomer. It purports to provide some security to individuals, corporations and communities impacted by the failure of a nuclear power site and provide them with financial compensation for the consequences of that failure and the contamination that inevitably would flow from it. That is the way the bill is being sold. However, the reality is just the opposite.

The bill has nothing to do with protecting working families, neighbourhoods or communities. It is all about making it easier for private interests to build nuclear plants. It is part of the government's agenda, as it was part of the former government's agenda to some significant degree, to privatize the nuclear industry in Canada and to sell off the existing operations in a variety of forms, basically to shift all control to the private sector. Any new operations would similarly be owned and operated by the private sector.

There is a fly in the ointment, if I can use that analogy. The reality is the government cannot get financing in the private sector for the nuclear industry for the construction of new plants or for the renovation of existing plants so they meet operational standards because of the potential for a catastrophic financial risk to the lenders if there is even a minor leak of radiation from a nuclear power site.

It is quite clear that the legislation is totally about protecting the interests of the private sector nuclear industry and the people who would finance it. To suggest otherwise is to either be grossly ignorant or dishonest.

I spent some time on a standing committee a few years ago reviewing the waste management organization bill, which was legislation to establish a government organization to deal with potential sites for the disposal of nuclear waste. In the course of the hearings, which went on for quite some time, some of the information that came forward talked about the consequences of contamination from nuclear power sites.

One of the stories I always remember was about a small nuclear plant, one of the original plants built some time in the early fifties in the United States, that was not properly managed. There were small continuous leaks so the entire site was contaminated, something in the range of about 20 acres. Eventually the plant was shut down.

In the 1990s, after the plant had been shut down and sitting dormant for quite some time, through court orders in the United States it was required that the plant be cleaned up. By this time the private operator had gone bankrupt and was out of the picture, so the federal government and the state government had to take on the burden. At that time, there was no liability insurance available for nuclear plants.

● (1135)

There was no requirement, when that plant was built, to establish a fund to deal with the consequences of a leak or to deal with the cleanup once the plant had closed. There was no money there at all, so it was borne by both the federal and state governments in the United States.

They did get rid of the entire building, which of course was contaminated, but then they had to deal with the site, the soil. Their

method of dealing with it was to go down to I think something like 20 feet, truck it to an incinerator and burn all of the soil. What was left, which was still radioactive contamination, was then buried and stored at another nuclear plant site. The price tag for this in the early nineties was \$13 billion, and there were no buildings that they had to deal with; that was just the soil.

Let us look at what we would be dealing with if we had a Chernobyl-type disaster, and actually we do not really have to go anywhere near that far.

I want to say, as a bit of an aside, that whenever I think of Chernobyl I think of a meeting I was at of the Essex County Federation of Agriculture in the fall this past year. It was the tradition to have a presentation from an outside group on a variety of topics. There have been a number of interesting presentations over the years, but this last year a family from the Chatham area told about the experiences they had in helping the children of Chernobyl.

What happened after Chernobyl was that there was an immediate evacuation of the area of, I think, a 40 or 50 kilometre radius around the plant, especially downwind, and I have to note that the Minister of the Environment just made a comment about turning the lights out in Saskatchewan. I am sure he is quite capable of operating in the dark because I think that is the way he normally operates.

Back to Chernobyl and a serious issue. When they did this evacuation, they did it in part with the local climatic conditions, in particular with the wind pattern. So people downwind were even more removed.

But then what happened after a number of years, even though the entire site, thousands and thousands of acres, was still contaminated, families started moving back, almost out of desperation and, of course, began producing crops, which continued to be contaminated with radioactive material.

So this family in Chatham and a group they had been helping with had been told that if they could get them out of there, even for a short periods of time, it would reduce substantially their risk of getting cancer from the radioactive exposure they had. And so, there is this international program in Canada, and this family is part of the group, that has begun to assist by bringing both elementary and secondary school-aged children over to other countries.

Ireland is a big participant, as is the United States and Canada. We take students out of that contaminated area during their summer vacations, and just because they are in Canada or in a safe zone for six weeks or seven weeks of the summer, it will dramatically reduce, we are being told by the experts, the potential for them to get cancer, at least at an early age, even though they will go back into the exposure for the balance of the year.

Government Orders

• (1140)

When I think about that story, I also think about who is paying for that. It is not the nuclear industry because it has no liability. The Soviet regime did not require any of that. It is not the current government of Russia or Ukraine because they do not have the resources, Ukraine in particular. This is entirely being funded by this non-profit organization. In fact, the group was there that night to ask for financial assistance. It was interesting to see the emotional response from all of us and a substantial amount of money was raised.

Let us then transpose that to Canada and say we have a significant spill of radioactive material. Whether we take the site at Bruce nuclear or the ones on Lake Ontario near the Toronto-Oshawa area, if there were not money to take care of the area around Chernobyl and there still is no money, imagine what it is going to be like if we have that kind of a disaster in Ontario? What is \$650 million going to do?

That is what the absolute maximum limit is under this legislation. It would not do much for that site in the United States that cost \$13 billion back in the nineties, which would probably be a \$20 billion figure now. It would not do anything for all of the families, individuals and children who would be affected because the \$650 million would be gone in the twinkling of an eye.

Think about what it does. We have nuclear plants sitting right there on Lake Ontario and Lake Huron. Any substantial spill would significantly impact on the Great Lakes all the way through into the St. Lawrence. We know that contamination, that radiation, has a lifespan that is beyond the comprehension of our current science.

We hear scientists talk about half life. What they are really saying is we do not know yet, in spite of the nuclear industry being six or seven decades old, how long the contamination will last. We get estimates of 1,000 to 10,000 years, but any nuclear scientists of any substantial credential will say that they just do not know, that those are minimum ranges of how long the contamination will last.

Again, think about the nuclear plants at Bruce and Lake Huron. I know that area fairly well. I have family there and I have spent summer vacations in that area of Kincardine, Port Elgin, and South Hampton. Think about what \$650 million would do and more importantly what it will not do. It will not deal with anywhere near the property damage and losses that would be consequential from a spill. It will not do any appreciable good for all those claims we are going to have from people who will no longer be able to work and will suffer cancer, early deaths, et cetera. What about all the medical treatment they are going to require? In a situation like this we look at literally the potential for the collapse of our health care system. I know that sounds dramatic, but it is the reality of a substantial spill. That \$650 million just does not cut it.

• (1145)

It does not provide protection for individuals, for businesses, for communities, for the province, or for the country. So why are we doing this? We are doing it to try to facilitate the expansion of the nuclear industry and we are doing it to make it possible to privatize the nuclear industry.

If the bill were to go through, and it probably will because it has the support of the government and the opposition parties, other than the NDP, it would actually expand the risk levels. So the \$650 million again becomes more of a joke because it would make it possible, which it is not right now, but it would make it possible to expand the nuclear industry.

There is no question that we need legislation in this area, but the legislation should be that there is unlimited liability on the part of the nuclear industry for the consequences flowing from a spill, a rupture.

If we dumped garbage on our neighbours' property, our laws say to us and society says to us that we must pay to clean that up. We do not turn to the government and say it should clean it up. We do not turn to the neighbours where we dumped it and say that it is on their property now and they can clean it up. If one of their children falls and cuts their foot or their hand on the glass that we have dumped on their property, we are responsible because it is our actions that have caused that. That is the tradition in our law, going back to the common law system and the parliamentary system in England for hundreds and hundreds of years.

This legislation says to this sector of the economy that it can get away with that. If it dumps its waste through its negligence on the neighbours' property, whether it is the whole of Lake Ontario and Lake Huron or the neighbours who live downwind in Toronto and Oshawa, it will have not have to pay them beyond this amount. We know the amount is ridiculously low.

In effect, with this legislation, we are giving a permit for the industry to expand and in effect, we are saying to the nuclear industry, we will impose some limited liability on it, but it does not need to worry about it too much because beyond that it is safe. Then the governments, individuals, corporations and businesses will have to pick up the rest of the tab. We know the rest of the tab is many billions of dollars. That is the reality of what we are dealing with.

I want to refer back again to the work that we did in committee with the waste management organization. The risk level continues to rise because we continue to increase the sheer volume of waste that we have from our current plants and of course we will continue to do so if we build any new ones. From all the work that we did in that committee and the reports that really precipitated the work of that committee, there is no safe storage mechanism in the world for nuclear waste.

The Americans have not figured it out in the U.S., which would arguably be the most advanced country in terms of the work that it has been done on nuclear waste and how to deal with it. They have not figured out how to deal with it safely and securely with full protection for society. They have not been able to do it.

• (1150)

It is not simply the length of time that the material remains contaminated by radiation. It is the actual nature of the contaminated material itself. We have no way of dealing with it. We know we can reduce it somewhat in volume, the nuclear rods in particular. We have developed some technology to reduce that part of it by reusing it. There is very limited reduction, but there is a little bit.

Government Orders

Whatever we have been able to do in that regard has been more than offset by just the sheer volume that is being created as the nuclear plants continue to function and provide us with energy.

The risk is going up, literally on a daily basis as the plants continue to operate and continue to produce radioactive material. In this legislation, we would be limiting the liability, so we can only expect that the risk will continue to rise, in particular, if new plants are built.

I was about to say 50 years from now, but let me say for sure that in 100 years or 200 years from now, those societies will look back at what we did here since the early fifties and wonder if we were crazy.

My answer to them would be no, we were just reckless. We were reckless to go down this road in the first place. We were reckless because we see this as a panacea, a solution, in the sense of increasing the use of nuclear technology for energy production. We were reckless because we know we have alternatives that, arguably, even now, and probably for a few years, are less expensive than the nuclear alternatives. We know that if we pumped more money into research and development of alternative fuel sources that we could be even more quickly dealing with this issue.

This is not an answer at all to the problem with which we are confronted, whether it is energy production or it is a—

• (1155)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): It is with regret that I must interrupt the hon. member, who had 20 minutes but has taken 22 minutes. We will have questions and comments and I am sure he will have a chance, under this period, to say what he did not have a chance to say.

Questions and comments. The hon. member for Vancouver East.

Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, when the member for Windsor—Tecumseh speaks in the House with his knowledge and depth of understanding on this and many other issues, I think we all listen very carefully.

I would like to raise with him a question that concerns us very much in our caucus. He pointed very well to the long term nature and impact of nuclear accidents, incidents, storage, spills and all the rest of it, which concerns us in terms of the length of time that we are debating and what the bill before us applies to in terms of liability, but we are also very concerned about where the nuclear industry is going in Canada.

We have the issue of the status quo and what we now know exists in our country, but there are also moves afoot by the government and possibly other governments in terms of supplying energy to the United States, which is a huge problem. We need to take into account, as we debate the bill, that we may see an expansion of the nuclear industry in Canada.

We need to ask a question. Will the bill be adequate? We know that the current bill that is being amended was clearly inadequate. Everybody agrees that a significant change was needed in terms of the liability but the serious question is whether the changes that are being brought forward in Bill C-5 would begin to address even the status quo.

With the increase or expansion in the nuclear industry and capacity in Canada, we may, unfortunately, see an increased risk in terms of accidents, spills and situations that are dangerous, and then this bill becomes very critical.

Could the member comment in terms of what he might see as we move toward the future and the dangers the bill has because it is so limited?

Mr. Joe Comartin: Mr. Speaker, crucial to the debate is how our risk assessment is conducted by the nuclear industry, both for existing plants as well as new ones. It is not just the potential for new plants, which is a reality I think we will be confronting, it also involves existing plants because parts of a number of them are not functioning now and a lot of proposals on the political agenda are for them to be reactivated at very substantial cost. We are talking hundreds of millions of dollars at a minimum and usually several billions of dollars to get a reactor back online once it has been shut down and then the restoration has to be done.

The way the financing industry works, if we need to go to the private sector to borrow money, one of the things it looks at is what happens if it does not work and it has a mortgage or security against the property. In law in Ontario and in all of the common law provinces, when one places that kind of security on a property and there is default, the lender assumes ownership responsibility. As part of that ownership responsibility, the lender must face the consequences of the cleanup.

Therefore, a big financial institution could tell, let us say, the people at Bruce Nuclear that it is prepared to lend them \$2 billion but that there is no way that it will accept responsibility for billions more dollars if there is a contamination. The institution could ask for a limitation on the liability because it wants the security of knowing it will not have to pay an additional \$650 million if a disaster or any kind of substantial consequential leak from a rupture occurs. The lenders are really pushing for this.

People may wonder why a company would not just go to an insurance company and buy insurance. I will point out that there is fixed liability in the United States but it is \$10 billion. The nuclear industry has been able to get insurance. We hear from the nuclear industry, which the government has bought into, that Canada could not get that kind of insurance, that the limits could not be set that high. I do not understand that.

Canada's insurance industry is as active and vibrant as it is in the United States. Given that we compete with the Americans with regard to producing energy, it seems to me that we should at least be playing on the same level playing field as they are. It is always the term we hear, mostly from Conservative economists, that we want to be on a level playing field but this is one of the times we would not be. It is to the detriment of Canadian society that we are not prepared to follow those rules even though they are demanded of us in so many other areas.

Therefore, even if we were to fix it at \$10 billion, it would be a substantial improvement over this bill by a long shot.

Government Orders

The other thing it does is it forces the financier to look closely at the safety measures implemented by the operator. There is another check and balance, if I can put it that way, by that methodology and the greater the liability the closer that scrutiny is.

• (1200)

Ms. Olivia Chow (Trinity—Spadina, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is a great honour to speak to Bill C-5 regarding nuclear liability.

What is the cost of cleaning up a nuclear accident? We had a nuclear accident in the 1940s in New Mexico and a series of nuclear accidents in the 1950s in Russia, in Chalk River, Ontario and in Illinois. If I have time later, I will go through some of the examples.

However, the nuclear accidents that captured the public's attention the most were Chernobyl, Three Mile Island and Windscale.

I pay a lot of attention to Chernobyl because we have seen a huge increase in the rate of thyroid cancer in children and families in Chernobyl. I know a lot about thyroid cancer because I have thyroid cancer and after studying the disease I noticed that one of the causes was exposure to nuclear reactors, nuclear waste or nuclear radiation.

Thyroid cancer is one of the fastest growing cancers in the world, aside from skin cancer, although both have a growth rate of about 5% per year.

What is the cost of helping survivors of this disease? Once the thyroid has been removed, people will need to take certain types of drugs for the rest of their life. The cost of the drugs, in a country where there may not be adequate health care or pharmacare, could be enormous. Therefore, it is absurd that the bill would limit the liability of a nuclear accident to only \$650 million. It costs so much more, not only for each individual, but also to repair all the damage that is inflicted by a nuclear accident.

The liability for a nuclear accident in U.S. is \$10 billion. The Canadian amount of \$650 million is at the bottom of the heap according to the international standard. Yes, Canada is well known to be at the bottom of the heap with regard to the international standard, not only on nuclear liability but also with regard to nuclear waste. Nuclear waste lasts for thousands and thousands of years. It is a good comparison to look at something that lasts for that length of time versus something that is so much about our future, our children.

The children of Canada are our first concern because they are our future. Canada is not only at the bottom of the heap in terms of nuclear liability and the \$650 million limit if this bill passes, but we are in fact putting our children, in terms of our investment in a national child care program, also at the bottom of the OECD heap.

• (1205)

In terms of liability, in Germany there is no limit. Not only Germany but a lot of European countries are moving more toward unlimited liability limits. As the world is going in one direction, Canada is going backwards as usual by saying that we are going to cap the liability at \$650 million. Also, no private insurance would be made available.

That actually says to a lot of the cities and areas around nuclear plants that they are only worth \$650 million. If there is a nuclear accident, it would cost billions of dollars in damage, personal injury and death, so who would pay? Let me answer that question in a

minute, because this is the critical situation. If it is not the corporation that is paying, who is paying?

That is why the New Democrats, at the committee and at report stage, moved 35 amendments. We took the Liberal Party at its word. In the House of Commons in October of last year, the Liberal critic said:

—this is a very important bill and I will be recommending to my caucus and my leader that we support it and send it to committee. In committee we will be doing our job as official opposition listening to stakeholders and experts, and we will review the bill in detail.

However, as usual, the Liberals are missing in action. They try to say that they really are worried about the nuclear industry, but they are not sure whether they are saying yes to nuclear industry expansion. They were saying that maybe the liability was too low, maybe they would amend this, and maybe they would study it.

After all of that discussion, what did they do? They did not bring in any amendments whatsoever. We are not surprised, are we? The Bloc did bring in a few amendments, which were nothing that would fundamentally alter the bill, but it did not matter, because the amendments from the Bloc and the New Democratic Party were defeated. Why? Because the Liberals did not support any of them, even though they said publicly that they were extremely concerned about nuclear safety.

As members may recall, when there was a shutdown at AECL, the Liberals were saying that safety is really important. They said that we must invest in safety. As for the history of AECL, for example, there was hardly any investment in the last 15 years. What the Conservative Party is doing right now, after firing Ms. Keen because she said that perhaps it was not very safe, is to sell AECL and privatize it.

I notice that the Conservatives have not met an issue that they do not want to privatize. They are privatizing the airline industry safety measures in Bill C-7, which we are debating. It is about privatizing airline safety so that the airlines would police themselves. The Conservatives are saying not to worry, to let them do their own thing.

On immigration, it is the same thing. They are saying to privatize it, to give the contracts to the visa office and let those private companies deal with it.

It is the same thing here in Bill C-5. If there is a problem, the government is saying, we will let the taxpayers pay for it. But \$650 million is not enough. It will take many billions of dollars. Who is going to carry the costs of cleanups?

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●(1210)

Who is going to carry the cost of cleaning up of the Great Lakes if Pickering has some trouble? Who is going to clean up the environment? Who is going to deal with the people who develop ill health? It will be the taxpayers, not the industry. The government does not worry about taxpayers. It will let the industry do its own thing. In fact, this legislation is a big yes to the nuclear industry.

I note that the Conservatives want to sign on to the Global Nuclear Energy Partnership and turn Canada into a nuclear waste dump for those who do not have space for nuclear waste. Canada is a big country. Maybe they can put some of it here, because after all, if there are any problems, the liability would be capped at only \$650 million. Do not worry about it, that is the attitude, and do come to Canada, even though we know there is no long term nuclear waste storage solution in the world.

For example, let us look at cleanups. There are huge and expensive cleanups. Port Hope is stuck with a huge number of problems that it has to clean up. The Northwest Territories is another example.

Nuclear waste remains deadly even after thousands and thousands of years. The bill in front of us is saying that the government will not have to worry about this waste, that taxpayers can handle it. That is extremely unfortunate. Why? Because many of the municipalities in southern Ontario are saying no to this kind of reckless behaviour.

Let me give the House an example. Twenty years ago, Guelph had a record of being one of the best cities in terms of dealing with waste management. Now, with the new mayor, the entire city is focusing on how to have zero waste. Guelph wants a big reduction in the amount of waste.

Last weekend, a conference was held in Niagara Falls. It was put together by the Ontario Zero Waste Coalition. The coalition is looking at a situation in which companies that have waste take on the responsibility for that waste. For example, Interface is a big carpet company. If someone buys a new carpet from Interface, it takes the old one back.

We are seeing a trend toward this, which is that people and companies must take care of their products, whether it is the waste or the packaging. That is the direction the world is taking. We should do the same thing with nuclear waste.

If there is a nuclear installation, we want make sure that its waste is taken care of and that if there is an accident, the liability limit is unlimited, or at least to a standard that is extremely high, in the billions of dollars, for example, not this measly \$650 million in Bill C-5.

That is why I am astounded that the Liberals and the Bloc will not do everything they can to block this bill. This bill really limits the civil liability and compensation for damage in the case of a nuclear accident. We know there has been a series of accidents in the past. I have a long list of them. How can it be possible that on the last day of this sitting of the House of Commons we get no debate but only complete silence from both the official opposition and the Bloc?

●(1215)

Are they not worried about their residents, their voters, discovering that in the last few sitting days of the House of Commons before the summer break we allowed a bill of this nature to pass? How can we possibly do that?

Do we think that people in southern Ontario, where there are big nuclear plants, are not worried that if there are even more nuclear reactors being built the company liability would be only \$650 million? What is the worth of a city? Let us look at Guelph. What is the worth of the Great Lakes? What is the worth of Aurora, right beside Guelph? I went to the University of Guelph for a short period of time. There is the city and the zoo and a great number of places. In Pickering, it is the same thing.

How can we say that if there is an accident it would cost \$650 million and we could repair everything that is damaged? Just for the lake itself, cleaning up the water would cost \$650 million, never mind the health damages and contamination of all the buildings in the area.

Let me tell members about some of the nuclear leaks. I will start with recent ones. In Tennessee in March 2006, 35 litres of a highly enriched uranium solution leaked during a transfer into a lab at the Nuclear Fuel Services plant in Erwin. What happened? The incident caused a seven month shutdown and required a public hearing on the licensing of the plant.

A company wanting to build a new plant and seeing a liability of only \$650 million perhaps might think that it could skip a few safety standards. Maybe it would not do everything that it should to ensure that it has the safest nuclear facility because, after all, the liability is only \$650 million.

Further, by the way, the bill also says that a person would have to take action within three years of becoming aware of damage, with an absolute limitation of 10 years after an incident. In the case of bodily injury, the limit is 30 years.

However, we know, and I know personally, that cancers and genetic mutations, et cetera, will not appear for at least 20 years following exposure. That is why in Chernobyl for the first 10 to 15 years it was not very obvious. It was only 20 to 30 years later that we began to see the huge rates of thyroid cancer, other cancers and genetic mutations in the future generations, with the children suffering.

By that time, according to this bill, it would be too late. No one could sue or do anything because of the time limit.

The bill also restricts liability to Canadian incidents except when there is an agreement in place with another country and the operators are Canadian. What happens if the operators are not Canadian? They could be German, Chinese or American. Does it mean that the operators would not be liable? That is outrageous. How can we possibly allow this bill to pass?

Government Orders

• (1220)

I have at least 14 pages of nuclear accidents since 1945. There are hundreds of them, and each of them has had serious implications. Let me list another one. In 2005, in Illinois—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Andrew Scheer): Order. I will have to move on to questions and comments.

The hon. member for Mississauga—Erindale.

Mr. Omar Alhabra (Mississauga—Erindale, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, frankly I am quite disturbed by what I heard from the member. The member consistently throughout her speech misled Canadians, fabricated allegations and fearmongered. If she keeps that up it is going to ruin her chances of winning the provincial leadership of the NDP. She needs to stick to the facts and act as a responsible member of Parliament.

She said that nobody from the Liberal Party debated this bill. She said that nobody from the Bloc debated this bill. She said that nobody asked serious questions or acted responsibly. She knows that she was not at committee. She knows that this bill transcended partisan politics. Committee members worked together, listened to witnesses, experts, nuclear scientists. Yes, there is a legitimate debate about at what amount the liability limit should be capped and other issues. There are legitimate questions and legitimate debates, but the member is misleading Canadians, misleading her constituents. She is trying to stall this bill. Why? What will happen if she stalls this bill? The liability will remain at \$75 million. How is that good for Canadians?

Host communities of nuclear power plants said that they support this bill and are waiting for its approval. What is she doing? Why is she stalling? Why is she being an obstacle to the communities that are hosting nuclear plants?

• (1225)

Ms. Olivia Chow: Mr. Speaker, I noticed in the old days when we were debating other accident prone projects, such as Adams Mine, the home area, for one reason or another, would make a decision as to what it supported and did not support.

What I have said is clear. I said that the Liberal Party did not put forward one amendment, not one at committee. It is true. I also said that all amendments, whether they were Bloc amendments or NDP amendments, were defeated. Why? Because the Liberals and the Conservatives voted together to strike all of them down. That is what I said.

I was asked why would I stand against this bill. Had the Liberal member heard me earlier on, he would have heard that I have a particular interest in nuclear reactors. Why? Because the fastest growing rate of cancer is thyroid cancer. The number of people who have thyroid cancer is dramatically higher in places like Windsor and Sarnia, places that are close to huge amounts of pollution and degradation of the environment.

That is why I am personally interested. I know that nuclear reactors and nuclear waste cause thyroid cancer. That has been proven. That is why I am very interested in this bill. That is why in the last two days of this sitting we should not allow this bill to pass.

Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, first of all it is unfortunate that the member for Mississauga—Erindale did not even bother to listen to the response from the member for Trinity—Spadina, given that he asked the questions.

I listened to the whole speech by the member for Trinity—Spadina. I want to thank her for sharing very personal information about her own life and the fact that she is a survivor of a thyroid cancer. I know that the member for Trinity—Spadina did an incredible amount of research and that is why she is very knowledgeable of the relationship between thyroid cancer particularly and the nuclear industry. As she has pointed out, thyroid cancer is one of the fastest growing cancers. I do not think it is always easy to share one's own personal experience, particularly when it comes to one's health and family. I want to thank her for being very open about that because I think the more awareness there is about thyroid cancer and other cancers and their direct relation to environmental concerns, the better. There are genetic links as well, but in terms of the environment, there is such a strong relationship.

The member pointed out that the Liberals had really done nothing to address this bill. I would like to draw to her attention that the member for Mississauga—Erindale said last year:

This is a very important bill and I will be recommending to my caucus and my leader that we support it and send it to committee. In committee we will be doing our job as the official opposition listening to stakeholders and experts, and we will review the bill in detail.

I am not sure that happened and so here we are. The NDP put forward 35 amendments in committee. We did not see any substantive changes from the Liberals to improve this bill which is seriously flawed.

Maybe the member for Trinity—Spadina would like to comment on that.

Ms. Olivia Chow: Mr. Speaker, I do not understand how we can say that we are extremely concerned about the environment, that we will shift taxes, that we will do everything we can to protect the environment, that we will tax more, move things around and give corporations at least \$1.7 billion here and there and yet say to Canadians that if there is a nuclear accident, they should not worry about it, but they will be picking up the tab. I have not seen any cleanup of any nuclear accident that cost less than \$1 billion. Normally if it is a big accident the cleanup costs billions of dollars. How can we say we will limit it? How could any member of Parliament of any party possibly stand here and say that they are extremely concerned about our planet, are extremely concerned about the future of our water and our air quality, and that is why they will support this bill? I do not understand it.

Government Orders

I want to point to one incident. On April 26, 1986, in Ukraine which was then in the U.S.S.R., there was an explosion and complete meltdown. It started with a mishandled reactor safety test, which led to an uncontrolled power excursion causing a severe steam explosion, meltdown, and release of radioactive materials at a nuclear power plant approximately 100 kilometres north-northwest of Kiev. Fifty fatalities resulted from the accident in the immediate aftermath, most of them being cleanup personnel. The people who went in to clean up died. There were nine fatal cases of thyroid cancer. Members will notice that I have been talking about thyroid cancer. Five fatal cases of thyroid cancer in children in the Chernobyl area have been attributed to the accident. The explosion and the combustion of the graphite reactor core spread radioactive material over much of Europe, not just in Chernobyl, but much of Europe.

How many people were evacuated? A hundred thousand people were evacuated from the area immediately surrounding Chernobyl and an additional 300,000 from the areas of heavy fallout in Ukraine and Russia. There is an exclusion zone of 3,000 square kilometres encompassing the whole site, which has been deemed off limits for human habitation for an infinite period of time; not for one year, five years, or ten years, we are talking about forever.

We have seen studies by the government, by UN agencies and by environmentalists—

• (1230)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Andrew Scheer): Order. Resuming debate. The hon. member for Vancouver East.

Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House today to speak in opposition to Bill C-5, An Act respecting civil liability and compensation for damage in case of a nuclear incident.

As the House has heard from other members of the NDP today, we are very concerned about the bill. We are on the second to last day of Parliament and the bill has been around for a while. Extensive work has been done in the committee. The NDP brought forward 35 amendments to try to make some improvements to it because we felt it was so significantly flawed. Unfortunately, we did not have the support of other parties for those amendments, so here we are.

Yes, in truth, we in the NDP are trying to stop the bill. We do not think it should go through. I am certainly going to put forward my two cents' worth today.

I am from Vancouver East, British Columbia. People in B.C. have always lived in an environment with the potential of nuclear accidents because to the south of us there are nuclear facilities. There is the Hanford facility in Washington State, which has been the site of serious accidents in the past. I know people in communities in southern British Columbia live with much concern about their future and the future of their children because of the nuclear industry and what happens when there is an accident.

Nobody wants an accident to happen and we need to have the maximum number of precautions to ensure none do. However, the bill before us deals with the question after the fact. What happens if there is an accident and what is the liability?

First, members of the NDP agree 100% that the current legislation, which goes back to the 1970s, is terribly inadequate. It set a liability limit of \$75 million, which in today's terms would be nickels and dimes in liability for the nuclear industry. The new bill sets the liability limit at \$650 million.

Some may look at that and say that it is a big improvement and suggest that we should go for it. However, when we scratch the surface of the bill and start to examine it in terms of international law and context, the limits contained in the bill on a nuclear operator of \$650 million is at the bottom of the international average. To me that immediately raises questions. Why would we place ourselves at the bottom of an international average? Also, why is this bill being put forward at this point?

We have heard concerns from communities, environmentalists and people who are opposed to and worried about the nuclear industry. They say that the bill has more to do with the Conservative government's plan to sell off Canada's nuclear industry and then set up an insurance scheme, and it knows the current act and scheme is completely inadequate, that takes the liability away from operators and puts it in the public purse.

By setting the cap at \$650 million, we know there is a provision where a special tribunal could be set up by the Minister of Natural Resources and if further funds were required, they would come out of the public purse. This basically means that a nuclear operator would have to pay out a maximum of \$650 million and the public would be on the hook for millions and possibly billions of dollars in the case of an accident.

Right off the top, the numbers do not work. If we are going to amend the act, and it should be amended, then let us do it properly. Let us ensure we set the liability at a level that is within the context of what happens in the international community.

We are also very concerned that Canada is signing on to the Global Nuclear Energy Partnership and that this could turn Canada into a nuclear waste dump. There could be all kinds of contamination as a result of that as well. Some of my colleagues today, the members for Trinity—Spadina, Western Arctic and Windsor—Tecumseh, have spoken about what we see as the long term impact and effects of this bill. Let it be said that the \$650 million is very inadequate.

• (1235)

We worked very diligently in committee to seek amendments to the bill. We put forward over 35 amendments to try to improve the bill, the accountability, the discretion of the minister, the level of liability and so on. It is a surprise to me that those amendments failed and here we are today with the bill at third and final reading.

When we look at the history of the nuclear industry globally, but certainly in North America, a long record of incidents have taken place. My colleague from Trinity—Spadina referred to a list of nuclear accidents that we have been referencing.

When we read that list, which is 14 pages long, it is pretty scary to know these incidents have taken place with a fair amount of regularity over the decades, beginning August 21, 1945, at the beginning of the nuclear age.

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It was in Los Alamos Scientific Laboratory in New Mexico, U.S. A., where a criticality accident with a plutonium metal assembly happened. Harry Daghlian was hand stacking tungsten carbide bricks around a plutonium metal assembly. The plutonium assembly compromised two hemispheres with a total mass of 6.2 kilograms, just short of bare critical mass. While moving a final brick, the experimenter noticed from neutron counters that the final brick would make the assembly supercritical. At this point, he accidentally dropped the brick onto the pile, providing sufficient neutron reflection to result in a supercritical power excursion. The experimenter quickly removed the final brick and disassembled the assembly. He sustained a dose of 510 rem and died 28 days later.

I do not know all the science behind it, but it seems to me it is important to reflect on these things because that happened in our modern day age. This is in the era of the beginning of the nuclear age in our world and we can see that these accidents have taken place, beginning in August 1945. Some of them are seared in our brains as we have watched images on television, particularly Chernobyl. I am reading from the list.

Even in Chalk River on May 24, 1958, there was fuel damage. Due to inadequate cooling, a damaged uranium fuel rod caught fire and was torn in two as it was being removed from the core at the reactor. The fire was extinguished, but not before radioactive combustion products contaminated the interior of the reactor building and, to a lesser degree, an area surrounding the lab site. Over 600 people were employed in the cleanup.

There was an incident at Hanford Works in Hanford, Washington on April 7, 1962. This is the one I am more familiar with, not that I was there but because Hanford is very close to Vancouver. It is something that peace and anti-nuclear movements in British Columbia have watched for a very long time because millions of litres of contaminants are stored in Hanford.

It is a vast area in Washington state. It is surrounded by security and fences. It is obviously not publicly accessible. There is an international boundary, the 49th parallel, but when it comes to a disaster, that boundary does not mean anything. These contaminants can get into the groundwater, wells, rivers and the air, so these are a very serious situations.

In April 1962 there was a criticality incident with plutonium solution. An accident at a plutonium processing plant resulted in a criticality incident. Plutonium solution was spilled on the floor of a solvent extraction hood. Improper operation of valves allowed a mixture of plutonium solutions in a tank that became supercritical, prompting criticality alarms to sound and the subsequent evacuation of the building.

Exact details of the accident could not be reconstructed. The excursion continued at lower power levels for 37.5 hours, during which a remotely controlled robot was used to check conditions and operate valves. Criticality was probably terminated by a precipitation of plutonium in the tank to a non-critical state. Three people had significant radiation exposures.

●(1240)

The list goes on and on.

Probably the most infamous one, and one that had global proportions, was on April 25, 1986, the complete meltdown at Chernobyl. This involved a mishandled reactor safety test, which led to an uncontrolled power excursion causing a severe steam explosion, meltdown and release of radioactive material at the Chernobyl nuclear plant approximately 100 kilometres northeast of Kiev. Approximately 50 fatalities resulted from the accident and in the immediate aftermath, most of those being the cleanup personnel. In addition, nine fatal cases of thyroid cancer in children were attributed to the accident.

The explosion and combustion of the graphite reactor core spread radioactive material over much of Europe. I am sure like many people, I remember the images of that accident and the fear the people felt. One hundred thousand people were evacuated from the areas immediately surrounding Chernobyl, in addition to 300,000 from the areas of heavy fallout in the Ukraine, Belarus and Russia.

An exclusion zone was created surrounding the site, encompassing approximately 1,000 miles, or 3,000 kilometres. It has been deemed off limits for human habitation for an indefinite period. I know there have been documentaries about what happened at Chernobyl by people who have gone back and filmed this vast area, which is now, in effect, a dead zone where human habitation cannot take place.

These are very serious matters and a bill like this gives us cause for reflection about the nuclear industry in Canada. The bill is setting the stage for expansion in Canada. In fact, I asked my colleague from Western Arctic earlier, because he is our energy critic and he is very knowledgeable on this issue, far more knowledgeable than me, what he thought about the bill in terms of what it meant for the future. He pointed out that Bill C-5 was really the tip of the iceberg.

We know nuclear energy is being looked at as a solution to greenhouse gas for producing energy sources. He informed the House of the situation at the Peace River nuclear plant being contemplated, with transmission capacity that could go to Montana. Again, we see a pattern of decision-making and privatization that is linking us with the enormous energy needs in the United States.

These issues are linked. What begins as a bill in terms of what appears to be a question of liability is linked to a much larger question as to where the government plans to take us in the nuclear industry and the kinds of expansion plans contemplated.

People in my riding are very concerned about that. People feel adequate safeguards are not in place today. We have had the whole debate in the House about what happened at Chalk River with the shutdown of the reactor and the crisis it created for medical isotopes. We saw the debacle that took place with the Conservative government when it fired the head of the organization. This is all part of a greater scheme of a privatization and a sell-off of these nuclear resources to put it in private hands.

On the one hand, we have to debate that. We have to examine that from a public policy perspective. On the other hand, we have a responsibility, as parliamentarians, to ensure the legal framework is put in place, whether we talk about public policy or private operations, and that the liability will be adequate.

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•(1245)

I hope that I have provided information today to alert people to the fact that the bill really does not go far enough. It is something that will pass, we presume, unless we can hold it up and that is what we are going to try to do. I think, as we now move into new decades of nuclear expansion, it makes one wonder if we will be again back at the drawing board if we do have a significant incident in this country.

God forbid that that ever happens, but if it does happen, will the provisions in this bill have the capacity to deal with the claims that would result when people in a local community, businesses, livelihoods, people's health and children's health are impacted by such an accident?

It is interesting to note that in the U.S. the liability is \$10 billion. That is actually shared among the plants. It is a joint effort. That is more than 10 times higher than what we are talking about in this country. Again, we have to question why has the limit been set at \$650 million. It just seems to be woefully inadequate.

We would like to see the bill not move forward, not pass. We would like to see further consideration on this question of liability. We would like to see discussion and some really clear plans from the federal Conservative government as to exactly what its intentions are with the nuclear industry here in Canada.

While we would certainly agree that the current bill has to be changed because the liability is so low, we do not think this particular bill will do the job. It needs to be contained within a much broader policy debate about the nuclear industry. The paramount question in that debate and in any legislation that comes forward is the public interest.

It is not the interest of the nuclear industry. It is not the interests of the people who want to just suck up more and more energy and more and more capacity for energy, it is not the interests of U.S. multinational corporations who might be looking to Canada as a place where they want to do business. The primary concern is public health, the public interest, and the interests for future generations.

In that regard, the bill seems to be very short-sighted. I want to thank my colleagues, the member for Vancouver Island North and the member for Western Arctic, who have been our two primary critics. They worked really hard on this bill. They went through it, every clause. They figured out that it was very limited and it was something that we could not support. At committee, they went to bat and put in a number of amendments. It was very surprising that those amendments were defeated by the government and by the other parties.

I know the Bloc put a few amendments and we certainly appreciate that. However, at the end of the day, the bill has not been changed. So we move forward now with a bill that is very limited.

Therefore, we will be speaking on this and we will be pointing out these deficiencies. We want to draw people's attention to the fact that the bill is now at this very critical stage. We are going to certainly do what we can to make sure that it does not pass, not because we do not want to see a liability set but because we want to make sure that it is being done in a proper way. That it is going to be done in a way

that protects people so that if there is an incident, an accident, that people will actually have the capability to make a claim and receive some sort of compensation. It will not be at the discretion of a tribunal that the minister sets up, but a due process and a fund will be created which will protect people. Surely, that is the most important thing that we are considering here today.

I urge my colleagues to consider those concerns that we have. I am very proud of the fact that we have taken the time to look at the bill and to come to the conclusions that we have based on what we believe to be in the public interest of Canadians, and that is why we will be opposing the bill.

•(1250)

Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for taking the time to address this issue and to ensure that she gets her point of view on the record.

I note that many of the other members of Parliament from the different parties have chosen not to speak on this issue. There has been this overwhelming silence in many cases from both the Liberals and the Conservatives about what this bill means. I say thanks very much to my colleague for putting forward her point of view.

When we talk about liability within the existing structure, as long as the Canadian government is the main owner of the nuclear facilities in Canada, in reality what that means is that there is almost unlimited liability for the nuclear industry because the government is backing it up. What we are doing with this bill is creating a situation where we are going to use the minimum international standard, so we can open up the opportunity for other companies to take on the responsibility for our plants or take them away from the government.

In the United States there are laws where if a company works in a country where the laws do not match the international standards, the American company may be judged by the American laws. That puts them in a situation where they would be judged under the liability of \$10 billion.

By the government moving out of nuclear energy and turning it over to the private sector, we are actually limiting the liability that Canadians have. We are setting in many distinct rules which are going to make it very difficult.

•(1255)

Hon. John Baird: What does this have to do with the carbon tax?

Mr. Dennis Bevington: Mr. Speaker, I am getting sort of a short shrift from my Conservative colleagues here in the House on this issue. If I can once again get the—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Andrew Scheer): Order, please. I think the hon. member for Western Arctic still has a few questions to pose. Some members are talking about some other issues that may or may not come up later on in the day. We should stick to questions or comments based on Bill C-5. It looks as though the hon. member may have finished asking his question.

The hon. member for Vancouver East.

Ms. Libby Davies: Mr. Speaker, I think the Minister of the Environment is too eager to get to question period. He cannot wait to go at it. We will get there in about an hour, but right now it is nuclear liability.

Government Orders

I would like to thank the member for Western Arctic because I think he has put his finger on it. What is presented in this bill is only the tip of the iceberg. It is a bill that is setting the stage for the privatization of the nuclear industry in Canada. It is setting the stage to limit the liability, so that it is easier for operations to happen.

If I could answer the member's question, I think that raises the most serious question as to whose interests is this bill in? For the NDP the primary interest is Canadians and the protection of the health and welfare of people in the local communities.

Yet, when we look at this bill and what its impacts could be in the future, if there were an accident and the fact that the liability is being limited to a paltry \$650 million, which in nuclear terms is a nickel and a dime, then obviously we have a lot of worries about the bill. It seems to be pandering and catering to private interests to allow a desirable environment in which they can move. That is not necessarily good for Canadian interests. In fact, we would argue on the contrary, that it is very bad.

I think the member has identified one of the key concerns that we have about this bill, that it is only the very beginning of a much bigger debate that unfortunately we have not had. It is not for lack of trying to raise that debate. I know the member himself has been a very strong advocate for the need for a national energy debate, so that all of these questions can be related: the need for an east-west grid, the need to consider why it is we are moving so rapidly to build the capacity of the tar sands to supply American markets, how environmental concerns are being thrown out the window, and the fact that nuclear capacity and availability could be part of that scenario. We see that already as something put forward as a response to greenhouse gases.

There is a lot that meets the eye here. I thank the member for raising these concerns.

Ms. Chris Charlton (Hamilton Mountain, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to commend my colleague from Vancouver East and the member of Parliament for Western Arctic for doing such an exceptional job in talking about nuclear liability and why it is that we feel so strongly about needing to oppose this bill.

As she so eloquently pointed out, the \$650 million cap is an international minimum and is completely inadequate for protecting the interests of Canadians. I think she covered that area extremely well and frankly passionately on behalf of Canadians who want us here in the House to protect public interests.

I know the member could have talked about this for hours. I wonder if I could take her into that other area of the bill which deals directly with nuclear safety. We are in the dying days of the session and suddenly we are in this rush to get through a number of pieces of legislation, this is not the only one, that in a very real way undermine the safety of hard-working Canadian families.

The other example is Bill C-7, where we are talking about safety in the airline industry. The government is very eager to throw caution to the wind in favour of protecting its friends in the industry. I think we are doing the same thing here when it comes to the nuclear industry.

Let me remind folks who are watching today what the bill is about. The bill will shortchange ordinary Canadians who would

become sick and/or die from a nuclear accident, or who would lose all they owned because of contamination, or who would lose a family member who would die from cancer or radiation sickness. These are the people we need to protect and we have that opportunity by opening up this legislation.

Our critic from the Western Arctic put amendments in place that would have protected Canadians' safety. I wonder, with whatever little time the member for Vancouver East has remaining in this debate, if she could focus on the safety aspect of this legislation.

• (1300)

Ms. Libby Davies: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Hamilton Mountain for rising to speak on her concerns about the bill and I am sure she will be speaking later on it as well at greater length. She echoes my concerns and those of the NDP. I would point out that Gordon Edwards, who is the president of the Canadian Coalition for Nuclear Responsibility, has said that any vote for this bill would be taken as an approval of nuclear power. It is a concern about the safety standards and the fact that the bill, as part of a larger privatization agenda that the government is so eager to rush forward on, is something that damages the public interest.

I am very glad that the member mentioned Bill C-7 which is the next bill behind that because it is exactly the same kind of track. It is a track of privatization. It is a track of deregulation. It is a track of putting the public interest below private interests and that is exactly what we do not want to see. A majority of Canadians believe we are here in this place to protect their interests, particularly when it comes to questions of significant liability around a nuclear incident and accident.

As the member has pointed out, people may be impacted by an accident and they may receive significant health concerns as a result, or that may manifest itself in a future generation if it were something that was very serious. People want to know that they have legal protection.

Yet, it seems to me the protection that is provided in the bill is really shortsighted. It is minimal. It is at the bottom of the international standings of what these protections are all about. Why would Canada, as is commonly phrased, be racing to the bottom? Why would we not be ensuring that we are leading the way with standards, whether it is on the environment, labour rights, or social standards?

This is part of a huge agenda that is taking place globally where we see a stranglehold of multinational corporations who want to advance the capacity for greater profitable gains at the expense of environmental degradation and a loss of standards for people who work in an industry. This bill is very much a part of that kind of agenda. Another reason we should say no to it.

Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank the House for this opportunity to continue on the same vein as my colleague from Vancouver East with our concerns and reservations about Bill C-5, the nuclear liability and compensation act.

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I actually asked for permission to join in this debate. I came sprinting to the Commons from my office in West Block hoping for the opportunity to rise and speak to this bill. I noticed there was another debate going on the last time I tuned in on my television and that seems to have collapsed. When this bill came on, I said to myself, "Self, this is a bill that you want to be involved in. You want to be on the record".

I said that to myself, partly because one of the most important books to come across my desk in recent memory is one that a colleague sent to me. It is written by Dr. Helen Caldicott, a name that many of us remember well, a well-respected, internationally acclaimed scientist. The title of her book is, *Nuclear Power is not the Answer*.

Dr. Caldicott felt compelled to write this book because, as the world grapples with the obvious risks to the environment by greenhouse gas emissions, it is tempting, seductive almost, to revisit nuclear power as perhaps the source of energy that might not contribute to global warming. In the temptation to be lured in that direction, we fear, and she fears in her book, the world is overlooking the potential risk and the gaps in the technology that cannot give assurance to the world's citizens that this is the right way to go.

We in the NDP were alarmed in that sense when Bill C-5 was introduced. We spoke against it immediately, saying that the last thing we want to do at this point in time, when the world is being attracted to revisit nuclear energy as a viable option, is in any way diminish, undermine or deregulate the safety regime associated with the nuclear energy system as we know it. It is a shocking idea. As I said, I want to build off the comments of my colleague from Vancouver East. It seems to be a worrisome motif, a hallmark almost of the corporate sector today, that it is trying to further deregulate and undermine the environmental standards and reviews that are necessary.

As the world becomes more aware, we become more insistent on developers and industries to be more compliant and to be more sensitive to environmental issues. That is a nuisance to them. They have been forced by the general public to go in a direction they do not want to go. The only way they can maintain the status quo or even diminish the status quo in terms of safety is by regulation. Bill C-7, which was before the House earlier this week, is along the same vein. It would dismantle or certainly diminish a safety regime.

I asked a page to go to the Library of Parliament, that wonderful resource, and bring me a copy of Dr. Helen Caldicott's book, *Nuclear Power Is Not the Answer*. To her credit she found it in jig time. I strongly recommend it to all of my colleagues in the House of Commons, in the context of debating this bill. They should pick up this book and go through some of the important points that this internationally well-respected scientist cautions us about. I am just going to read some of the titles of the chapters. I am not going to read from the book at any great length.

Dr. Caldicott goes through the whole costing of nuclear energy. As seductive as nuclear energy is, even on the face value, it is extremely expensive. She spends one chapter chronicling the whole cost of nuclear energy when we contemplate the insurance, never mind the

cost of cleanup if there was in fact, God forbid, an accident, and the pollution, et cetera. I will come back to Dr. Caldicott in a minute.

• (1305)

I think we are better than this. I think we are better than expanding our nuclear system in the context of meeting our energy demands and needs. Let me explain what I mean by that.

I used to be the head of the carpenters union, the head of the building trades union in the province of Manitoba. The government of Manitoba lost a major power deal with the province of Ontario. The hydroelectric power sale somehow fell apart which resulted in the cancellation of a hydroelectric dam. That would have employed 1,500 of my members for five years. I was running the carpenters union at the time. It was devastating. It forced us to take stock, to do some research as to how we might cope with the loss of the job creation opportunities associated with building a hydro generating station.

I commissioned some research. We published a report called, "A Brighter Future—Job Creation through Energy Conservation". We compared the job creation opportunities in a large megaproject such as the Darlington nuclear power station, which it has just been announced they intend to double in size. Let me backtrack. The original bill for Darlington was going to be \$4 billion. By the time the dust settled, it was turned on and it generated its first unit of energy, the bill was \$15 billion and I do not think they have finished spending yet.

What we learned in the comprehensive study, and I raise this in the context of Bill C-5, is that demand side management of our precious energy resources is far smarter than the supply side management in a number of significant ways.

A unit of energy harvested from the existing system by energy conservation measures is indistinguishable from a unit of energy produced at a generating station, except for a number of key important things. First, it is available at one-third the cost. The unit of energy that we harvested from the existing system by eliminating waste and by energy conservation measures is available at one-third the cost of generating a new unit of energy at a hydroelectric dam or nuclear power station.

The second great advantage is that the new unit of energy is online and available immediately. In other words, the second we turn off a light switch in a room, that unit of energy conserved is available to be used at the house next door or to be sold offshore internationally. We sell a lot of power from Manitoba to Minnesota and the states directly south of us.

If we had an east-west grid for electricity, we could in fact close down every coal-fired plant in Ontario by selling them clean hydroelectricity from Manitoba. I think most Ontarians would be happier to get cheap clean power from Manitoba instead of expensive dirty power from coal-fired generating stations or, God forbid, risky electricity from nuclear power stations.

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Another advantage between demand side management units of energy, or units of energy harvested from the existing system and ones produced at a generation station, is the lag time where one does not have to borrow money to do it. In fact, many energy retrofits can be done through a process where the upfront cost is paid for, free of charge to the property owner, and the financier is paid back out of the energy savings over the next three, five or seven years. That is a great system. It is sweeping the Building Owners and Managers Association, those property owners that own skyscrapers and large institutional, commercial and industrial buildings because their energy costs are going through the ceiling. They can have off balance sheet financing to renovate and energy retrofit those buildings for which they do not pay a single penny. They pay it out of the energy savings over the next three to five years until that renovation is complete.

The federal government would be a perfect place for that. You would be surprised to learn, Mr. Speaker, or maybe you would not be surprised to learn because, being in charge of the parliamentary precinct, you do supervise a great number of publicly owned buildings, there are 68,000 federally owned buildings in Canada, many of which were built during a period of time when we were wasteful in our design and usage of energy. They are energy hogs, really. They are wasteful. There have been some legitimate efforts to try to upgrade and modernize those buildings to make them less wasteful, but there has never been a comprehensive plan to deal with a significant number of these buildings.

• (1310)

Imagine what a demonstration project that would be, if the federal government of the day actually engaged in energy retrofitting thousands of these buildings that are owned by the-

• (1315)

The Speaker: Order. The hon. member for Tobique—Mactaquac is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Mike Allen: Mr. Speaker, I believe the topic that we are talking about here is Bill C-5, nuclear liability.

We have had a number of discussions at our natural resources committee about the greening of electricity in Canada, and I was beginning to think that the member was a member of our natural resources committee and was talking about the greening of electricity in Canada.

I would suggest we get back to the topic of third reading debate on Bill C-5, nuclear liability.

The Speaker: The hon. member for Winnipeg Centre, I know, was going to make his remarks relevant to the bill. I assumed he was talking about other forms of energy having to do with nuclear liability and I was waiting for him to get to that point, but I am sure he will take note of the point of order and respond accordingly.

Mr. Pat Martin: That is right, Mr. Speaker. I think you will agree that patience is a virtue. If the member would be more patient, he would see me developing this line of reasoning, hopefully coming to the logical conclusion that we should vote against Bill C-5. It is a circuitous route, I will confess.

I was trying to illustrate that Bill C-5 actually strips away some of the safety regime associated with nuclear energy. We believe that is harmful. We believe that Canada is better than this.

We do not need to be dealing with Bill C-5 at all, because we have alternatives. We have the technology. We have the luxury of being a wealthy developed nation. We should be leading the world in alternative energy, not embracing an outdated technology.

I put it to the House that nuclear power is an outdated technology. It was a detour on the road to a sustainable world and it took us in a direction that we will regret as a people, not just as a nation.

A number of bad ideas are associated with trying to meet our energy demands and a number of bad ideas are associated with trying to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions. One of them, I believe, is the expansion of nuclear energy.

Another one is what was just tabled today by the Liberal Party of Canada, this carbon tax notion, which is a distinctly bad idea. When we are talking about energy, we would be negligent if we did not speak about the consequences of production of energy, and that is the greenhouse gases that we now know are strangling our planet.

I was putting forward the notion that we should be seized of the issue of the demand side management of our energy resources more than we are seized of the issue of the supply side management of our energy resources. Nuclear power is not the answer.

Do not take it from me, I say for members, but take it from Dr. Helen Caldicott, one of the world's leading authorities on the general health of the world and the impact of technological advances. There is a fallacious and misleading advertising campaign put forward by the nuclear energy industry.

I have one advertisement with me here that is being used by the nuclear power industry in trying to convince Canadians and people around the world that it is the answer to harmful greenhouse gas emissions. It tries to convince us that if we are worried about greenhouse gas emissions and carbon dioxide, we should "go nuke" or go nuclear.

What is really worrisome is when industries like this use children to try to convince people that all is well and all is safe for our next generation. As for this particular advertisement, I will not read from it. I am not using it as a prop so much as I am to explain.

There are three pictures, one of very happy children in bathing suits jumping into a lake and clearly enjoying themselves. It is probably a clean lake that they are swimming in. Another is a picture of group of children lying on the grass, which presumably is pesticide free and free of any kind of nuclear contamination. They are clearly enjoying playing some kind of a video game, I presume, on their laptop. The other one is the affirmative action part. Two children of colour are playing on an old tire hung by a rope from a tree. They are swinging back and forth on that tire. They are clearly enjoying themselves and living a carefree life in the shadow of the nuclear power plant in the distant horizon.

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The message is that these children are not affected by the effluent from that nuclear power plant, which dominates the horizon of the neighbourhood they live in. They still play in the lakes, so the water is fresh. They still lie on the grass, so the grass has not mutated in any form. Presumably the fish in the lake do not have three eyes like Blinky in the Homer Simpson show. The children swinging from the swing are not concerned about the quality of the air they are breathing as they play so adventurously.

This advertisement makes the point that already in America one in every five homes and businesses is electrified by nuclear energy. That worries me, because when I was young, the number was not nearly that high. In fact, it is within my lifetime in the post-war era that nuclear energy has expanded and spread and is seeking to gain mainstream acceptance by the population. The industry has sought, in a very deliberate public relations marketing attempt, to convince the world that there is absolutely nothing wrong, that nothing can happen. "Trust us," it says.

• (1320)

A lot of these plants are privately owned. Not all nuclear power plants are operated by states. A lot of these laboratories that have the nuclear accidents are privately owned.

I have a list here of some of the hiccups that have occurred on the road to a nuclear future. It is quite an extensive list. I do not think time will permit me to share all of these hiccups with members, but they are not limited to underdeveloped nations that do not have the technology to deal with or supervise the operation of nuclear power plants.

There was a partial core meltdown in Monroe, Michigan. The sodium cooling system malfunction caused a partial meltdown on October 5, 1966. My parents were marching around outside nuclear power plants saying "no nukes" in 1966. They had that written on signs. At the time, they were worried that nuclear energy was leading to nuclear warfare.

In Wood River, Rhode Island, there was a critical accident with the handling of uranium solution. The tank containing 93% uranium-235 was being agitated by a stirrer. The worker, intending to add a bottle of trichloroethane to remove organics, erroneously added a bottle of uranium solution to the tank.

Accidents happen, as we know. In my field, we might chop off a finger when an accident happens, and it is a tragedy. When we are dealing with a nuclear power station, we can cause serious problems for the planet.

In Galloway, Scotland, there was a partial core meltdown when graphite debris partially blocked a fuel channel, causing the fuel element to melt.

These are fairly innocent, innocuous things. There is no great oversight involved here. There are finely tuned, technical things that can happen. If Bill C-5 in any way diminishes the safety enforcement or regime associated with the nuclear industry, we are against it.

Based on this pile of statistics alone, this should be enough to compel most Canadians to say, "We do not want to go down this road if that is where it is leading".

At the Mayak Enterprise in Russia, there was a criticality accident with plutonium solution. In Obninsk, Russia, there was a terrible radiation accident at a nuclear power plant involving the manipulation of the fuel rods.

The potential for accidents is overwhelming at almost every step of the process, never mind the storage. I live in Manitoba where there is now the bright idea that spent nuclear rods will be stored in a deep underground storage plant in and around the eastern part of the province, in the deep granite of the Precambrian Shield.

The industry really does not have a satisfactory way of or idea about how to store spent power rods, which still have enormously long half-lives, other than to keep them in great swimming pools full of water. We cannot find a swimming pool in the inner city of Winnipeg for children to swim in, yet the countryside is littered with Olympic-sized swimming pools full of spent nuclear power rods.

Again, these accidents do not always occur just in underdeveloped nations that do not have the technology to supervise nuclear facilities properly. The Argonne National Laboratory in Illinois had a critical accident with uranium particles in plastic. It turned out that was a bad idea, because the doses to four individuals were 136 rads. That level of exposure is fatal. Workers in the nuclear industry were being deceived as to the hazard.

I am no stranger to that. It makes me furious when industries that know full well certain things are hazardous do not inform their employees. I worked in the asbestos industry for many years. They were lying to us about the health hazards of asbestos then, just as they are lying to us today about the health hazards of asbestos. But the asbestos cartel is so powerful that it has even the Conservative Government of Canada kowtowing to it today. Canada is still the second largest exporter of asbestos in the world, even though we now know full well that asbestos is a killer and there is no safe level of asbestos anywhere—

• (1325)

The Speaker: Order. The hon. member for Tobique—Mactaquac is rising on another point of order.

Mr. Mike Allen: Mr. Speaker, I know the member said that we were taking what he called a rather circuitous route to get there, but I am still trying to find the relevance to Bill C-5, nuclear liability, in the comments the hon. member is making. I am sure he has some great things to say about the bill. I just wish he would talk about the bill.

The Speaker: I am sure the hon. member for Winnipeg Centre has been taking circuitous routes here and there and then hitting on subjects that have to do with the bill after explaining why he has done it, perhaps being a little far away from the principle of the bill from time to time. I am glad the hon. member for Tobique—Mactaquac is paying such close attention and is able to remind the hon. member for Winnipeg Centre of the necessity for addressing the bill before the House at all times in his speech.

Mr. Pat Martin: Mr. Speaker, I was quite innocently trying to illustrate that a lot of industries and the corporate sector are negligent in warning workers in their industry about the potential hazards, the nuclear industry being one of them.

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I was using the asbestos industry as another example of how the asbestos industry and the nuclear industry have successfully duped the general public into believing that their product and their industry are safer than they really are. Let me put it that way.

They do so, as I illustrated earlier, by spending hundreds of millions of dollars in marketing and PR campaigns to try to convince the public that there is really nothing to be afraid of and that we can dismantle our safety regime, such as Bill C-5 does, because, they say, “trust us” and they will take care of us.

This book by Dr. Helen Caldicott should be mandatory reading for anyone who intends to vote on Bill C-5. I urge everyone to read this book tonight, tomorrow or whenever they can before they vote on Bill C-5. I guarantee that it will turn people around on a dime. If they intended to support this bill, they will not any more after they read the cautionary tale associated with this book. Bill C-5 is designed to protect corporations more than citizens.

I know I am getting short on time, so I am coming to a conclusion. The point I was making about demand side management is that Canada is better than reverting to nuclear as a solution to our greenhouse gas emissions problems. We are smarter than that. We have the technology.

We should be leading the world in demand side management measures. We should be a centre of excellence for all the world to see in energy retrofitting, doing our public buildings first, our institutional buildings second, our private buildings third, and then every home in the country.

I remember the residents of a small town, Espanola, Ontario, who made up their minds about this when the member for Toronto Centre was the premier of Ontario in the early 1990s. They decided to see how far they could go. They decided to see how much energy they could save if they energy retrofitted, even to a small degree, every home, business, gas station, hospital and school in all of Espanola, Ontario.

The results were staggering. Even without comprehensive retrofitting, even with minor retrofitting, they harvested units of energy out of Espanola that they sold to the rest of the province, and they precluded the need for building any more nuclear power plants for quite some time.

If only we would expand that reasoning across the whole province. We have not even scratched the surface in harvesting units of energy out of the existing system. It is like mining for gold. Energy is gold these days. There is gold going up the smokestacks or leaking out of the leaky windows of every building in the country.

I began my speech by saying that a unit of energy harvested out of the existing system by demand side management measures is indistinguishable from a unit of energy produced at a generating station, except for a number of important differences.

First, it is available at one-third the cost.

Second, it is online and available for resale immediately. The moment we turn off that light switch in a room, that unit of energy is available for the light switch next door to be turned on.

Third, it precludes the need to borrow billions of dollars to build a generating station.

Fourth, it creates seven times the person-years of employment. If we are concerned about employing another generation as our manufacturing sector goes down the tubes and every job in the country is given to China, this give us employment as we energy retrofit our building stock. We can develop a technology and an expertise that we can export around the world. We will become known as champions of energy retrofit technology and energy conservation measures. That is an export technology I can be proud of.

I do not approve of giving loans so that countries can buy CANDU reactors from us, set up CANDU reactors in their countries and create bombs. We created the nuclear risk between India and Pakistan because we gave them both nuclear capabilities. We paid for it with loans that were never repaid. We did the same in Romania.

We are so desperate to sell our bloody reactors that we give countries the money to buy the reactors from us and we do not even ask them to repay the loans. I would rather be exporting energy retrofit technology. The best and most energy efficient windows in the world should come from Canada. The best energy efficient furnaces should come from Canada.

● (1330)

We should be proud to lead the world in this because we have the intelligence, the technology and the educational background. If we only had the political will.

It makes me want to cry when the only idea that we see debated in this country on energy and greenhouse gas emissions is a carbon tax on home heating fuel that will make some poor senior citizen living in northern Canada, who is already paying \$800 a month for home heating fuel, pay more. However, the guy who drives a Hummer will not pay any penalty. He will enjoy the tax cut that is supposed to come from this poor little old lady who is paying astronomical home heating bills.

If that is the level of debate we are having, we are wasting our time, our God given talent and the gift of technology in this country. We are completely blowing it in terms of an opportunity to develop the technology of energy retrofitting and demand-side management.

Before the member for Tobique—Mactaquac interrupted me, I was saying that 68,000 buildings in this country are owned by the federal government. What a brilliant place to start as a demonstration project, first to show the private sector and then to show the world how it can be done. Copenhagen has just declared that it will be the most energy efficient city in the world in the next 10 years and it has set about a cooperative public-private partnership to make that so.

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We could do that on a national scale if there was any kind of vision. If we had a national dream to become that country, we would be that country. Instead, we are tinkering with rearranging the deck chairs on the *Titanic* by adding a carbon tax in all the wrong places. It is a complete diversion that will waste the time, energy and intellectual capacity of the nation when that energy and capacity should be applied to something transformative and meaningful as we wean ourselves off dirty energy and embrace clean energy.

Yes, hydroelectricity is good and I am proud that the province of Manitoba will meet its Kyoto targets. It already is because of all the hydroelectricity it produces. I wish the Minister of the Environment was here. If it could sell that clean hydroelectricity east-west instead of just north-south, it could help Ontario wean itself off of its dirty energy and nuclear energy. Saskatchewan would benefit enormously, God bless it. However, there are three or four important key elements that need to fall into place before we can go down that road.

As we contemplate nuclear energy as an alternative, we would be negligent and irresponsible if we ignored the actual empirical evidence associated with the use of nuclear, such as in Kiev, Ukraine on February 4, 1970. We do not hear about these things in the national news, partly because, I would not call it a conspiracy, there is an unwillingness to share all of the facts. We have the Voronezh nuclear power plant in Russia in 1971. Bhopal is another liability and the costs associated with cleaning it up.

Bill C-5 would limit that liability. We are almost doing the industry's dirty work for it. Rather than the industry ensuring it does not happen any more, we are limiting its liability to \$650 million. That does not pay for the cleanup of a great deal of contamination in a major nuclear incident. What if we had something on the scale of Bhopal, my colleague from Western Arctic asks. There was a chemical spill at that time and 3,000 people were killed and 10,000 people were affected.

We could have thousands of people affected by a nuclear incident and the total liability would be \$650 million. I say that one individual being affected for a lifetime could be eligible for a settlement of millions of dollars. This liability would only pay for perhaps a couple of hundred people. It is wrong-headed and it should be defeated.

• (1335)

Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the member touched on a number of significant issues and some of them deal with the directions the government is taking on energy.

What have we seen so far? We have seen a \$2.2 billion investment in ethanol, in biofuels, which, in many respects, internationally is not considered to be a very good investment at all. If it does not have conditions attached to it, we may end up importing corn ethanol from the United States at a higher greenhouse gas emission rate than if we had just left gasoline in the tank. That is one of the things that the Conservative government has done.

The second is that it just put a quarter of a billion dollars into clean coal technology in Saskatchewan. The Conservative government in Saskatchewan is throwing in three-quarters of a billion dollars and industry is topping it up with \$300 million. They are creating a 100-megawatt plant for \$1.3 billion. This will never be cost effective.

The budget has \$300 million in it for nuclear, once again subsidizing an industry that has been around for 50 years, to keep it on its feet and to try to make it work. We see the same thing with the MAPLE reactors. Big dollars have gone into it, with no results.

Perhaps my colleague could speak to this a bit. What is it about the Conservatives, supported, in most cases, by the Liberals, in their inability to look at energy in terms of all the options and really come up with answers for Canadians that will work?

Instead, we see this "I'll fund this project in your riding if you fund this project in my riding" approach that is going on right now in Parliament, with no cohesive plan. It is not being done on the best advice of our scientists. As BIOCAP Canada quite clearly said in its reports to us with regard to biofuels, that we are taking these actions without thinking them through.

Does my hon. colleague know why do the Conservatives and Liberals continue to do things in such an ad hoc, piecemeal fashion?

Mr. Pat Martin: Mr. Speaker, my colleague from Western Arctic quite rightly points out that it is the absence of a cohesive plan, an overall central strategy that is worrisome, because often these piecemeal bits and pieces are at the whim or the will of an aggressive corporate lobby. They are individual incidents but they create a motif or a theme.

We recently dealt with Bill C-7 where the government is dismantling the safety associated with the air transportation system. Now we are dealing with the nuclear industry where the government is dismantling the safety provisions in the nuclear industry. I would suggest that not one person in this House should vote on this bill until they have read Dr. Helen Caldicott's book, *Nuclear Power is Not the Answer*. I implore members to get the book out of the library and read it. I will put it back today because I have read it.

I want to point out that the nuclear safety record in the world when compiled is a staggering and horrifying list. We have the explosion and combustion of the graphite reactor core in Pripjat, Ukraine that spread radioactive material over much of Europe. That was not in 1956 at the advent of the nuclear age. That was in 1986. Some 300,000 people had to be evacuated from the fallout areas.

We would think that would have ground the nuclear industry to a halt and that it would have regrouped to ensure that could never, ever happen again. However, in 1989, in Greifswald, Germany, fuel damage operators disabled three of the six cooling pumps. However, instead of the automatic shutdown, the fourth pump failed causing excessive heating which damaged and exposed 10 fuel rods. Workers again were hurt.

Earlier that year, at Hamm/Uentrop power station in Germany, fuel damaged spherical fuel pebbles became lodged in a pipe used to deliver fuel elements.

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The technology is so complex that every step of the way is fraught with potential failures. I am a tradesman. I am a carpenter by nature and I have been in installations of hydroelectric dams. I have never worked on a nuclear power plant but I know the complexity associated with generating energy and the room for failure in a hydroelectric dam when it stops producing energy for a while.

The possibility for failure in an incident associated with a nuclear power plant is that it can devastate whole communities, whole regions and contaminate them for generations to come. However, the government is trying to pass a bill today that would put the maximum liability on any nuclear company that has this kind of a nuclear incident, for Monty Burns, \$650 million, which is peanuts. A couple of hundred people alone who were affected by some of these accidents would easily burn that up in the liability lawsuits that are bound to follow.

Somewhere out there Homer Simpson is running a nuclear power plant. Somewhere out there Monty Burns is lobbying the Conservative Government of Canada today to ensure the safety regulations are not too onerous because "How am I supposed to make a buck cranking out nuclear energy if you make me pay for my mistakes?"

I put it to the government that if we are looking to nuclear power to meet our energy needs in the coming decades, we are not trying hard enough. In fact, we have ignored the obvious and we have embraced the outdated technology.

The post-war era was tragic in many respects. The petrochemical industry, the asbestos industry and the nuclear industry ran amok. We are just beginning to realize that we have soiled our own nest to the point where we can hardly live here any more if we do not change our ways.

We do not want to see the Darlington nuclear power plant doubled in size. We want to see it shut down. We want to see clean energy from demand-side management, from energy retrofitting, from solar and wind energy. We do not want to see the industry contemplating the next generation of nuclear power.

Some of us believe it was a mistake. We believe that a government with some vision and leadership would have done more than expand or compound the problem. We also believe that an opposition party with some leadership would come up with something better than the carbon tax that it is flogging today, because it will not tax the guy who drives the Hummer. The people who are trying to heat their home in the western Arctic at \$800 a month for home heating fuel will to pay the carbon tax. The guy driving the Hummer will pay nothing because it is excluded.

• (1340)

The government will take money from the person in the western Arctic heating their home but give a tax break to the guy driving the Hummer. That is the most convoluted, pretzel logic I have ever heard in terms of meeting a well-defined environmental problem.

We have been let down by both sides of the House today, with the exception of this little end where the NDP lives, where people are hearing some reasoned debate. The Conservatives have let us down with Bill C-5, hobnobbing with nuclear lobbyists again. I believe they have fallen victim to a bunch of clever lobbyists again. We have

been let down by the official opposition as well because those members have come up with something that will suck all the life out of the debate about reducing carbon emissions.

We only get one shot to capture the public's imagination, if we are to talk about limiting carbon emissions. Unfortunately, the debate is going to be about defeating this bad idea instead of being about solutions. We are going to have to waste our energy defeating the government's bad idea first before the genuine debate can begin.

• (1345)

Mr. Leon Benoit (Vegreville—Wainwright, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I listened to the member's presentation and most of it was just over the top rhetoric, causing completely unnecessary concern among Canadians when it comes to nuclear power.

However, one thing I really have a concern about is the way he portrayed people who worked at nuclear power plants, and that is completely unacceptable. He portrayed them as Homer Simpsons running the plant. He may think it is funny, but people who operate our power plants are extremely well trained, capable people. The member should apologize for that portrayal of workers at nuclear power plants.

Mr. Pat Martin: Mr. Speaker, I only point out the empirical evidence of the nuclear accidents in recent history that give great cause for concern.

If I spoke frivolously about the people who work at nuclear power plants, it is out of sympathy not out of any malice. Just like when I worked in the asbestos industry and it lied to me about the health hazards of asbestos, people who work in the nuclear industry on the front line are at risk and I believe they have been lied to about those risks. Most of these incidents do not talk about the community being contaminated. Most of these incidents resulted in the workers being contaminated and, in many cases, being killed by the nuclear risk associated with their job.

Mr. Alex Atamanenko (British Columbia Southern Interior, NDP): Mr. Speaker, once again it is my pleasure to appear before a full House to speak to Bill C-5. I notice my friend, the hon. member for Prince Albert, who knew I was speaking, decided to listen to my speech today, and I thank him for that.

First, I want to zero in on Bill C-5, speak a little about it and try to put it the context of what we are dealing with when we look at energy.

In an overview of Bill C-5, the Conservative government is taking what some would say a cavalier toward nuclear safety, and this recklessness is being supported by the other two opposition parties.

The bill will shortchange ordinary Canadians who get sick and die from a nuclear accident, or may lose all they own because of contamination or lose a family member who dies from cancer or radiation sickness.

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The \$650 million cap on compensation is not sufficient. The United States has a limit of \$10 billion. Germany has an unlimited amount. Many countries are moving toward unlimited amounts. No private insurance is available, and it has been estimated that a nuclear accident would cost billions of dollars in damage, personal injury and death.

Let us look at nuclear safety. Despite assurances from the nuclear industry, Chernobyl, Three Mile Island and Windscale all show that the potential for a nuclear accident is real. Later on, if I have some time, I will once again give an account of some of the accidents that have happened in this industry.

The safety of nuclear installations must be paramount. We have already seen the government willing to put the lives and property of Canadians at risk to keep unsafe nuclear reactors running.

The nuclear industry is not really a green choice, as opposed to what some people might want us to believe. Nuclear waste remains deadly for thousands of years.

A few weeks ago I gave a brief statement on depleted uranium and the effects it had on those who used weapons containing depleted uranium, not only the soldiers of those armies who use these weapons, but civilian populations in countries such as Iraq.

Canada exports uranium to the United States with supposed assurances that it will never be used for weapons. However, experts say that some of it actually creeps into depleted uranium weapons, which then endangers the lives of people in those areas.

The last time I spoke with regard to depleted uranium, I mentioned a film which graphically illustrated the damaging effects. I have asked the government to ensure that we become a leader in banning and abolishing all the depleted uranium weapons in the world.

A person exposed to a used nuclear fuel bundle will be dead within an hour. There is no long term storage solution that has been found for the waste. The processing of fuel and waste has resulted in widespread contamination requiring expensive cleanups, and I cite the example of Fort Hope, Ontario and Rayrock Mine in the Northwest Territories.

Before moving on, I will mention that some people on this continent and in the world are tracking nuclear power reactors and the effects they have on surrounding populations. It would be very wise for our government to explore the possibility of doing a comprehensive study, at least in our country, and perhaps coordinating it with our neighbours to the south, to see what effects there are on the health of people who live in the surrounding areas of nuclear reactors.

• (1350)

Approximately a month ago I met with Dr. Leuren Moret from the United States. She has been quite heavily involved in the nuclear industry and is one of the leaders in the world exposing the danger of depleted uranium. She has been coordinating and looking at studies that link the effects on health with nuclear reactors. In addition to cancer, there is some evidence pointing to the correlation between high rates of diabetes and the proximity to nuclear reactors. Whether this is in fact the case, whether this is science, I am not sure, but these concerns warrant an investigation.

Our country should take the lead on this and say that we will challenge the world to investigate the fact that some people may suffer and die from the effects of living too close to nuclear reactors. As we move on in this debate, this is one of the things at which we could look.

The answer is not in building more nuclear reactors. In the budget the government has been investing in nuclear energy. It seems there is quite a lot of money for nuclear energy, but very little for green alternatives, such as solar power, wind power, wave generation, geothermal and all kinds of things that truly are green clean sources of energy, which have very little impact and leave a much smaller footprint on our planet. The government should be supporting more of these sources of energy in our country.

If the passage of the bill allows the expansion of nuclear power in our country, it will be a big step backward for us in our quest to have a greener and cleaner energy source in many ways. We need to ensure that it not only does not create greenhouse gases, which it does not in that respect, but we need to look at if for other things, such as the waste, the mining that takes place and the tragedy, human and otherwise, to which I just alluded, that it could inflict if there were to be an accident.

It is not the green source of energy we should invest in so heavily. We should be thinking of much cleaner greener ways to go. I will outline a few points from our NDP plan for the environment in a few minutes.

Bill C-5 limits the total liability of a nuclear operator to \$650 million, which is the bottom of the international average. This is not enough.

Before outlining some of the tragic instances of nuclear accidents that have happened, it is important for us to realize there is another way of conserving energy and making our planet much more conducive to the environment. One way is what our party has proposed, and that is a cap and trade system. This is a mechanism at the heart of the Kyoto protocol. In fact, both candidates for the president of the United States have embraced cap and trade, making it a key tool in the continental fight against climate change. Cap and trade has already been tested in Europe and the NDP's plan builds on the lessons learned there.

My colleague, the hon. member for Outremont, was at an OECD conference in Europe. He said that the Europeans were embracing cap and trade as the way to conserve energy and fight climate change. They were not holding on to the fallacy of trying to put a tax on carbon so ordinary people would suffer, as my colleague from Winnipeg Centre pointed out.

When we called on other parties to reject the Conservative's dead on arrival clean air act and work together to build better legislation, the resulting legislation was deemed a breakthrough bill by environmental groups. The centrepiece of the bill was a carbon pricing regime. However, that is not enough. In addition to this method, which works, we need to create jobs in the green environment sector.

Statements by Members

We would propose a green collar jobs fund be established that would allocate \$1 billion per year to train workers, displaced workers and new entrants to the job market, so they could be provided with the skills that would be necessary to power Canada into the new energy economy.

● (1355)

The green collar jobs fund would be used to leverage training apprenticeships and investment partnerships from provincial and territorial governments, from first nations, Métis and Inuit communities, and from the private sector. For my hon. Conservative friends I repeat, from the private sector.

High skills training would be needed for such areas as installing and maintaining energy efficient and renewable energy technology for alternative cars and fuels, manufacturing parts for wind turbines and other new energy technologies, and energy efficiency auditing expertise.

It is a shame that a Canadian solar power private enterprise has to go to Germany to set up business because there is not enough incentive available in our country. Parallel to this, tax breaks are being given to the big oil companies that are reaping billions of dollars in profits. Something in this equation is not right.

At the same time, as we see with this bill, we are limiting the amount of liability in a nuclear accident. As my hon. colleague who spoke before said, there is something wrong in this equation.

In the province of British Columbia, where I come from, we had BC Hydro in control of our public water and our power system. The current government in British Columbia is slowly dismantling the public trust of our waters and our energy and creating what it calls public-private companies to damn the creeks, create energy and sell it on the open market.

I want to emphasize the importance for senior levels of government to take the lead and the initiative. The time is gone when we could just sit back and say that we would let the market take over and let private enterprise run our energy system. It is up to each and every one of us to—

The Speaker: I hesitate to interrupt the hon. member for British Columbia Southern Interior, but it is time to move on to statements by members. I assure him he will have seven and a half minutes remaining in the time allotted for his remarks when debate on this subject is resumed.

Statements by members. The hon. member for Fleetwood—Port Kells.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

● (1400)

[English]

CARBON TAX PROPOSAL

Mrs. Nina Grewal (Fleetwood—Port Kells, CPC): Mr. Speaker, earlier this morning the Liberal leader revealed the details of his carbon tax on everything.

Besides their show of solidarity, many Liberal MPs are on record opposing a carbon tax. The member for Wascana previously said, “A carbon tax is not a part of our planning or our thinking”. The member for Kings—Hants said, “I am strongly against energy taxes”. The member for Vaughan said, “It is certainly not an option for me”. Only a few short months ago, the member for Ottawa South insisted his leader opposed a carbon tax. He said, “Our leader’s position on carbon tax remains the same. He is not in favour of a carbon tax at this time”. The Liberal leader himself said, “There will be no carbon tax”.

Why did the Liberal leader and his followers mislead Canadians? Why do they want to bother seniors, fixed income Canadians, struggling small business owners, air travellers and all Canadians with a massive carbon tax on everything?

* * *

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Hon. Anita Neville (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this Saturday Canada will celebrate National Aboriginal Day.

National Aboriginal Day was first proclaimed by a Liberal government 12 years ago in recognition of the contributions first nations, Métis and Inuit have made to Canada.

It is important to note that last week’s apology to residential school survivors was made possible by many. They include: residential school survivor Assembly of First Nations National Chief Phil Fontaine; Willie Blackwater and other survivors like him who have the courage to speak out and pursue justice; former first nations member of Parliament Gary Merasty, whose motion calling on the government to apologize to survivors was unanimously adopted by members of Parliament in May 2007; my colleagues from LaSalle—Émard, Fredericton and Mount Royal; and former deputy prime minister Anne McLellan.

Their courage, commitment and dedication in seeing this apology through to fruition is something of which all Canadians should be proud.

On National Aboriginal Day we will celebrate these Canadians and thank them for their perseverance and their resolve.

* * *

[Translation]

DRUMMOND ASSOCIATION FOR THE DISABLED

Ms. Pauline Picard (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in 1986, people with reduced mobility wanted to appear before the Drummondville city council to oppose a development project, but they had to turn back, because city hall was not accessible for them. This turn of events led to the creation of the Association des personnes handicapées de Drummond 20 years ago.

Statements by Members

To mark this anniversary, the association is launching its website “Drummond accessible”, which lists some 3,000 businesses, buildings and public areas in Drummondville, and identifies each location's level of accessibility and any specific problems that might be encountered. Each location has been visited and the facilities assessed, providing an opportunity to speak directly with business owners about accessibility.

I would like to congratulate Daniel Mailhot, the association's director, as well as everyone who works to integrate persons with disabilities into all of society's spheres of activity.

* * *

[English]

HEALTH

Ms. Chris Charlton (Hamilton Mountain, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Statistics Canada says an estimated 4.1 million Canadians aged 12 or older are without a family doctor. Almost 40,000 of them are in Hamilton.

Amazingly, Hamilton is not considered an underserved area because McMaster University has a medical school. Incredibly, the provincial Liberals are using taxpayer dollars to pay graduates to move away from Hamilton.

This chronic shortage of doctors and nurses puts the health of seniors and hard-working families at risk.

The federal government has to step up to the plate and it has to do it now. After 13 years of Liberal neglect and cutbacks, both wait times and doctor shortages exploded.

Despite the Conservatives' election promise of a wait times guarantee, the shortage of health care professionals is continuing to worsen under the Conservative government. Ontarians probably will not be surprised by this. After all, the federal health minister was mentored by his former boss, Ontario premier Mike Harris, who fired hundreds of nurses and likened the profession to outdated hula hoops.

We need a serious federal contribution to recruit and retain health care professionals and to promote careers in the health sciences.

The health and well-being of hard-working families in Hamilton and right across Canada depend on it.

* * *

CARBON TAX PROPOSAL

Mrs. Joy Smith (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today the Liberal leader is desperately trying to spin that his regressive carbon tax plan would be revenue neutral. This is completely unbelievable.

Environmentalists do not believe his tax trick would be revenue neutral. David Coon, policy director of the Conservation Council of New Brunswick, said, “This is not an emissions reducing tax. It's a revenue generating tax to finance objectives that are definitely not of the environmental kind”.

The Canadian Federation of Independent Business said, “We do not believe that carbon taxes can be truly revenue neutral. ...it will certainly not be revenue neutral for consumers.”

The Atlantic Provinces Trucking Association executive director said, “Transportation costs would rise with increased fuel costs as a result of carbon taxes, prices of consumer goods and food would rise.... The bottom line is that adding taxes only adds to transportation costs which add to increased costs for consumers”.

Don Drummond, chief economist for the TD Bank, said after analyzing the plan, “It's never going to be revenue neutral”.

When will the leader—

● (1405)

The Speaker: The hon. member for Fredericton.

* * *

HEROISM

Hon. Andy Scott (Fredericton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to pay tribute to the bravery of three heroes from my riding: Evan Green, Nick Lannigan and Ryan Atwin.

Concerned after spotting smoke coming from the back of a building, these three teenagers rescued a 60-year-old gentleman after seeing him lie helplessly on the floor through a window. Their heroism continued when they alerted sleeping tenants of the danger and assisted in the evacuation of the building.

These three young men were recently honoured as heroes and given life-saving awards at the St. John Ambulance's annual awards ceremony.

I invite my fellow members to join with me in thanking these fine young citizens for their courage and inspiring their community.

* * *

CARBON TAX PROPOSAL

Mr. Bruce Stanton (Simcoe North, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians will not be tricked by the Liberals' plan to tax an extra \$15 billion with their new carbon tax and they surely will not be tricked by the Liberals' claim that this is going to somehow be revenue neutral. History is littered with attempts by previous governments to bring in taxes cloaking them as revenue neutral.

Canadians know better. They have seen this movie before. They remember the dawn of the gun registry and the GST. Canadians will not be tricked. Even the leader himself said this carbon tax was simply bad policy.

This plan for a carbon tax just reconfirms what we already knew about the Liberals. They never met a tax they did not like. They never met a tax they would not hike.

Statements by Members

[Translation]

SÉBASTIEN AUDY SUMMITS EVEREST

Mr. Robert Bouchard (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the people of my region are known for their eagerness to take up a challenge. Last month, a resident of Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean proved it in spades.

Today, I am proud to congratulate Sébastien Audy, the first person from the Saguenay to make it to the roof of the world. Together with François-Guy Thivierge and two sherpas, he reached the summit at 5:55 a.m. on May 22, 2008, a feat that so many people around the world want to accomplish. Support from our community, Deloitte, the Chicoutimi CEGEP, and Promotion Saguenay helped make his adventure possible.

I congratulate Sébastien on rising to this physical and mental challenge. At 29, he is the pride not only of his parents, Denis Audy and Réjane Roy, but of everyone in the riding of Chicoutimi—Le Fjord and the entire Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean region.

Bravo, Sébastien.

* * *

[English]

CARBON TAX PROPOSAL

Mr. Lee Richardson (Calgary Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal leader promised he would not bring in a carbon tax. This is another broken promise. We now have a Liberal tax promise to pay for Liberal spending promises.

It is obvious to all Canadians that a carbon tax will increase the cost of gasoline, increase the cost of home heating fuels, increase the cost of electricity, and increase the cost of transporting goods and services to all Canadians. It is also obvious that the Liberal carbon tax is not revenue neutral and is not a tax shift.

Politicians impose taxes and raise taxes to raise money. The Liberal carbon tax, despite the green rhetoric, is just a way for Canadians to pay for \$60 billion of Liberal spending promises. With soaring energy prices, Canadians want real solutions, not massive tax increases and phony promises wrapped in green rhetoric.

Canadians will not be fooled by this outrageous Liberal promise and will not fall for this crock of green shift.

* * *

BASHIR MAKHTAL

Hon. Judy Sgro (York West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Bashir Makhtal is a Canadian businessman who has been in an Ethiopian prison for more than a year. Mr. Makhtal was caught up in the violence in Somalia and took Ottawa's advice and went to Kenya. There he was arrested and, in spite of his Canadian passport, deported to Ethiopia.

Why does the minority Conservative government continue to turn its back on Canadians who find themselves in terrible circumstances while travelling abroad?

While I have the government's attention, I would like to know why it has not stepped up and taken on a leadership role to help end the violence in Somalia. When will the Conservatives start to take

concrete steps toward a resolution to the conflict in Somalia, once and for all?

* * *

● (1410)

CARBON TAX PROPOSAL

Mr. Ron Cannan (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the president of the B.C. Cattlemen's Association is saying a carbon tax in B.C. will cost a 200 head cow-calf operator an additional \$1,300 in expenses every year, far from revenue neutral.

Earlier today the Leader of the Opposition announced that in order to pay for his reckless spending promises he is proposing a carbon tax on everything. Today, the Liberal leader confirmed that his carbon tax trick is going to raise the cost of everything that my farmers purchase: fuel costs, up; feed costs, up; fertilizer costs, up; transportation costs, up. How much? I do not know. Maybe \$3,000 a year, maybe \$5,000, maybe even \$10,000 a year.

B.C. farmers agree and Canadian farmers agree a hike in taxes for essential expenses is not revenue neutral. The Liberals' carbon tax trick is bad for Canadian agriculture.

* * *

WAR RESISTERS

Ms. Peggy Nash (Parkdale—High Park, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Corey Glass, a U.S. war resister, and a constituent of my riding of Parkdale—High Park, faces deportation from Canada on July 10.

At age 19, Corey joined the Indiana National Guard. He was told that he would only be in combat if the U.S. were invaded. He signed up to defend people and to do humanitarian work. Instead, in 2005, he was shipped off to fight in the Iraq war, a war based on false premise, false intelligence, and without UN approval or that of major allies like Canada.

Most Canadians were opposed to this illegal war and accordingly Canada did not support the invasion. Countless Americans such as Corey feel the same. Many of them and their families have made enormous personal sacrifices to withdraw their military participation. They came to Canada to seek refuge and to seek the protection of a government whose House of Commons has demanded that the war resisters and their families be allowed to stay in Canada.

In the U.S. they will face hardship and prosecution simply for doing what our whole country has done: refusing to participate in this war. It is the highest form of hypocrisy for this government to keep Canadians out of—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Malpeque.

AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to emphatically reject the personal attacks and blatant politics displayed by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food yesterday in this House on my person.

Such behaviour demonstrates complete and utter disrespect for Parliament and fellow MPs. Instead of debating ideas, the Conservative member attacks individuals as a cover for his government's utter incompetence. Canadians deserve better.

When I speak on the hog and beef crisis and the government's lack of resolve, I do so for all farmers. When I speak on the government's cruel cuts to program spending by \$1.2 billion, I include all farmers. When I fight for the democratic rights of farmers to run the Canadian Wheat Board without government interference, I do so to protect supply management as well.

As a member of Parliament from Prince Edward Island, I have and will continue to fight for all our country's farmers and, in spite of the personal attacks, will continue to do so.

* * *

[Translation]

ORDER OF QUEBEC

Mr. Serge Cardin (Sherbrooke, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Ordre national du Québec is the highest honour awarded by the Quebec government. Those included in this order are people who have been awarded the title of grand officer, officer or knight.

Yesterday, 49 people received the Ordre national du Québec. Robert Bourassa and René Lévesque, former premiers of Quebec, were invested into the order posthumously. The premier also bestowed the order insignia on two grand officers, 17 officers and 30 knights. Today he will bestow the grand officer insignia on five other former Quebec premiers, namely, Pierre-Marc Johnson, Daniel Johnson, Jacques Parizeau, Lucien Bouchard and Bernard Landry.

It is with great pride that my Bloc Québécois colleagues and I sincerely congratulate the recipients of this well-deserved distinction.

* * *

•(1415)

[English]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Hon. John Godfrey (Don Valley West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as you can see, I have not quite gone yet.

That is because now, today, more than ever, Canadians have a clear choice concerning the environment.

The Liberal green shift will offer big tax cuts to all Canadians: taxes down. The Conservative plan offers dead ducks on tailing ponds

[Translation]

While our plan offers an improved child care tax credit to help families, the Conservatives are completely abandoning those most in need.

Oral Questions

[English]

While our plan offers credits to seniors and citizens living in rural areas, the Conservative plan offers unregulated hot air emissions from the environment minister.

[Translation]

While our plan will not—I repeat, will not—increase the tax on gas at the pump, the Conservatives are allowing gas prices to continually rise and—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington.

* * *

[English]

CARBON TAX PROPOSAL

Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it was not so very long ago that the Leader of the Opposition said, “In my eleven years in politics, I have never broken my word”. Then in the very same speech he said, “There will be no carbon tax”.

He also promised, “the plan I will reveal soon to decrease Canada's industrial greenhouse gases will not include a carbon tax”. He even referred to a carbon tax as “simply bad policy”.

However, today, in an eye-popping act of green-shiftness, the Liberal leader announced a massive carbon tax that will drive up the price of absolutely everything.

Now that Canadian voters understand what happens when they are asked to take the Liberal leader at his word, they are awaiting his next announcement, that he will be using his vast new carbon tax to pay for all those billions of dollars of new spending promises he keeps on making.

This carbon tax is not about a green shift. It is about shafting Canada's taxpayers. It is clear now just who Canadians can trust to keep their word, and it is not the Liberal leader.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[English]

THE ENVIRONMENT

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

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: Order, please. It is question period not cheering period. The hon. member for Etobicoke—Lakeshore has the floor. We will have some order.

Mr. Michael Ignatieff: Mr. Speaker, I am deeply touched.

Oral Questions

Today, the leader of our party proposed a very bold plan that would shift taxes from what we earn to what we burn. Canadians will have a clear choice. Canadians now want a debate about the way forward for our country that respects their intelligence.

Will the government commit today to give Canadians what they deserve: a serious debate about how to tackle climate change and make our economy green? Will it—

Hon. Jason Kenney (Secretary of State (Multiculturalism and Canadian Identity), CPC): Oh yes, Mr. Speaker, we promise to give them a good debate on this question.

Let me begin that debate by quoting a so-called expert on environmental policy who said that a carbon tax “is simply bad policy”.

This expert went on to say, “In the energy market, in particular, soaring prices make anything but a prohibitively high tax a mere nuisance for large producers”. Who said that? The leader of the Liberal Party.

Mr. Michael Ignatieff (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, these attacks are a little rich coming from a party that is led by a leader who did not believe in climate change until he took office.

It is rich to hear this righteous indignation from a party that in two and a half years has not begun to give Canada a climate change policy.

When will the government stop playing to the lowest common denominator, get up from the basement, and join the Liberal Party in an open debate about this fundamental issue?

• (1420)

Hon. Jason Kenney (Secretary of State (Multiculturalism and Canadian Identity), CPC): Absolutely, Mr. Speaker. We are happy to have a debate on the Liberal plan to impose billions of dollars of new taxes on everything for everyone in order to pay for Liberal unbudgeted increases in non-prioritized spending.

Canadians know that when politicians talk about weasel words like “revenue neutral taxes”, they are going to end up paying for it. They are going to take it in the neck.

When the leader of the Liberal Party talks about a green shift, the only green shift that is going to happen is green from Canadians' wallets to Liberal coffers.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Michael Ignatieff (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this proves what I just said. They are governing like an opposition party. Their mantra is attack, attack, attack.

It is not true that we are going to raise the price at the pump. It is not true that we are going to turn our backs on seniors and the disadvantaged.

When will they respect Canadians and engage with us in a serious debate about the facts, not about false accusations?

Hon. Jason Kenney (Secretary of State (Multiculturalism and Canadian Identity), CPC): Mr. Speaker, the only attack here is an attack by the Liberal Party on Canadian taxpayers. We are here to defend and serve the interests of Canadian taxpayers.

The leader of the Liberal Party talks about a “green shift”. The only green shift that is going to happen is green from Canadians' wallets going into Liberal coffers.

[*English*]

Mr. David McGuinty (Ottawa South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, less than a month ago in London, England, the Prime Minister admitted that he would “effectively establish a price on carbon of \$65 a tonne”. He argued that \$65 carbon was economic.

Can the Prime Minister now tell us why he says one thing outside of Canada and something else completely different here at home? While he is at it, can the Prime Minister name a single economist or environmentalist who says his plan will do what he claims?

And by the way, where the hell is the Minister of the Environment?

The Speaker: I do not think that the hon. member would refer to this House as a place of purgatory. He could perhaps restrain that language. We do have, of course, the Minister of the Environment smiling happily in his seat, but the hon. secretary of state is going to answer this question apparently.

Hon. Jason Kenney (Secretary of State (Multiculturalism and Canadian Identity), CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is sad to see the Liberals once again lowering the tone in this place, but I understand the member's anger. I understand it because I think he is more than a little frustrated that he cannot persuade one person, his brother, the Premier of Ontario, who has come out squarely defending Ontario taxpayers against the Liberal tax trick.

Premiers across the country understand that the Liberal so-called green shift will end up shafting taxpayers with higher energy prices, higher food prices, and higher prices on just about everything. They are not going to buy this bogus tax shift.

Mr. David McGuinty (Ottawa South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Conservative plan for global warming does nothing for low income Canadians, nothing for families, nothing to punish the big polluters, and nothing for the environment. Liberals will put money into the pockets of Canadians. We will put even more money into the hands of those who change their daily habits and stop polluting.

Why are the Conservatives, described by Professor Mark Jaccard as “completely dishonest”, sitting on their hands while the world labels Canada one of the worst offenders in the battle against climate change?

Hon. Jason Kenney (Secretary of State (Multiculturalism and Canadian Identity), CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is interesting to note—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. The hon. secretary of state has the floor.

Hon. Jason Kenney: Mr. Speaker, I took the time to read the Liberal tax trick document this afternoon and it is a funny thing. There is not one single page in it about actually reducing carbon emissions, not one page. There are 42 pages about new taxes on Canadians to pay for new Liberal spending.

Oral Questions

Canadians have heard this story before. They saw the movie back in 1993 when the Liberals promised to scrap, abolish and eliminate the GST. They broke that promise. We cut the GST. We have cut taxes by \$200 billion. We will continue to defend the interests of taxpayers against the Liberal Party.

• (1425)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, with the government's proposed plan, no progress in sustainable development is in sight and no real decrease in greenhouse gas emissions is anticipated. What we need is a carbon exchange, but in order to ensure its viability, we need absolute reduction targets for greenhouse gas emissions with 1990 as the reference year.

Will the minister admit that with his plan that proposes 2006 as the reference year and intensity targets instead of absolute targets, he is playing into the hands of the oil companies?

Hon. John Baird (Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to clarify to the leader of the Bloc that our plan includes absolute reduction targets for greenhouse gases. The good news is that a carbon exchange opened after we made our plan public. It is open; it is in Montreal. That is good news for our planet and for the fight against climate change.

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the only problem is that that is not true. They are not absolute reduction targets; they are intensity targets. It is in black and white in the Conservatives' plan. Either they cannot even reread their own documents or they prefer to mislead everyone.

They are not even using 1990 as the reference year. If they were, the aluminum smelters that have already reduced their greenhouse gas emissions by 15% since 1990 in Quebec would be benefiting. They are not because this government and this minister are in bed with the oil companies.

Hon. John Baird (Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today we saw a new alliance between the Liberal Party and the Bloc Québécois. The Leader of the Bloc Québécois is now a good friend of the great centralizer in the other corner of this House.

The goal of our plan is a 20% absolute reduction in greenhouse gases. That is good news for the fight against climate change and these are real results for our environment.

Mr. Bernard Bigras (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in an open letter, Alain Lemaire, president of Cascades, denounces the Conservative plan:

Fundamentally "green" companies will be the big losers in the new Montreal Climate Exchange if the government insists on retaining 2006 as the starting point for calculating emission reductions imposed on industry, rather than using 1990 as the reference year.

Will the Minister of the Environment be honest and admit that he is only using 2006 as the reference year because it is advantageous to the oil companies?

[*English*]

Hon. John Baird (Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, greenhouse gases are too high today. We have to cut them absolutely. That is why there is a growing consensus that we want to get the big emitters involved in a genuine effort around the world to reduce greenhouse gases, whether it is Yvo de Boer, who last week

in Bonn spoke up to the idea to reduce greenhouse gases by over the 2005 number. That is why liberal democrats in the United States Senate, like Barbara Boxer, and the socialist senator, Bernie Sanders, voted for a plan with 2005 numbers. The 2005 baseline was also used by the Japanese government.

Canada is providing real leadership. We are getting the job done.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Bernard Bigras (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the minister should be referring to Europe rather than to all sorts of other countries. Quebec and Ontario oppose the Minister of the Environment's plan. Everyone agrees on the principle of absolute targets and on 1990 as the reference year. An effective approach to greenhouse gas reduction requires a territorial approach.

If the minister is open to Quebec as he claims, why does he not revise his plan in order to include the territorial approach, as Europe has done?

• (1430)

[*English*]

Hon. John Baird (Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the House will be interested to know that it was the member in the Bloc Québécois who voted for the Kyoto protocol, which did not have any territorial approach for it. Therefore, the member will have to go to Quebec and explain why he voted for a non-territorial approach with respect to the reduction of greenhouse gases.

We are going to regulate the large polluters to reduce their greenhouse gases. We are going to regulate the car companies, through the Minister of Transport, to cut their emissions by 20%. We have a whole host of other initiatives designed to achieve an absolute 20% reduction in greenhouse gases. This is good news in the fight against global warming. We are not talking about it; we are doing it.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Jack Layton (Toronto—Danforth, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the most urgent crisis we face is climate change but the action promised has never materialized. The Liberal government did not get the job done. The current government cannot do it. We need only look at its inaction regarding the tar sands, the biggest polluter, the biggest polluting project in the world.

Why does the government not accept the argument that its approach based on intensity targets is a gift to the major oil companies? It does nothing to reduce pollution.

*Oral Questions**[English]*

Hon. John Baird (Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have three approaches, a tough, a tougher and a toughest approach, with respect to oil and gas in the oil sands. For existing facilities, we are requiring an 18% reduction and a constant 2% improvement. We are requiring a tougher and new cleaner fuel standard for plants that are currently under construction. Finally, is a mandatory requirement for carbon capture and storage.

This, together with the other industrial and non-industrial initiatives we are taking, will lead to an absolute 20% reduction of greenhouse gases. This is what our planet demands. This is the kind of leadership Canada is now getting, which it never got for 13 long years.

Hon. Jack Layton (Toronto—Danforth, NDP): That is right, Mr. Speaker. We do have three approaches. We have no plan from the government, with emissions going up. We have the wrong plan, unfortunately, from the Liberals, with no planned reductions at all to carbon emissions. Then we have our plan, which proposes a strong plan on the emissions, a real cap on pollution, a price on pollution paid by the big polluters, with all the money to go into the solutions that Canadians look for so they can make the right choices. Those are the options.

Why will the Prime Minister not simply stand and recognize them?

Hon. John Baird (Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the New Democratic Party is proposing to allow the big polluters to buy their way out of pollution; simply write a cheque to Ottawa and go on polluting our environment. That is not good enough for Canada. We need absolute reductions in greenhouse gases. That is what we are seeking to deliver.

Right around the country, though, provincial premiers are coming out saying they do not agree with the carbon tax. My premier, Dalton McGuinty, does not agree with the carbon tax. The Premier of Nova Scotia today came out against the Liberals' carbon tax proposal. One after another they have come out and they want absolute reductions, not a game of tax flim-flam from the Liberal Party.

Ms. Martha Hall Findlay (Willowdale, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Glen Hodgson of the Conference Board of Canada, Tom d'Aquino of the Canadian Council of Chief Executives, Jack Mintz of the University of Calgary, Don Drummond, Chief Economist at the TD Bank, Mark Jaccard of Simone Fraser University and Bill Robson of the C.D. Howe Institute, today the Prime Minister called crazy and insane the very type of innovative green shift plan these people all supported and that we today proposed.

What exactly is crazy here? Six leading Canadian economists or a Conservative talking grease cartoon character?

Hon. Jason Kenney (Secretary of State (Multiculturalism and Canadian Identity), CPC): Mr. Speaker, Premier Dalton McGuinty and the Premier of Nova Scotia have commented on it. The member just cited certain economists.

Here is what Don Drummond, chief economist for the TD Bank, says, "It's never going to be revenue-neutral for any individual or any corporation".

Andrew Coyne, columnist for Maclean's said, "The Liberals have used the carbon tax to fund their spending ambitions", and the plan is "not remotely "revenue neutral"".

This is what the experts are saying. Neither they nor ordinary Canadians will be fooled by this Liberal tax trick.

• (1435)

Ms. Martha Hall Findlay (Willowdale, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, talk about tax tricks, allegations and non-truths. There would not be one iota of additional tax on a litre of gasoline, not one. It would save significant reductions in income taxes for all Canadians, help for working families, help for the low and middle income earners, help for rural and northern dwellers and help for seniors to deal with energy prices. The Conservative government and the NDP have no plan to help people with energy prices and no plan for climate change.

Hon. Jason Kenney (Secretary of State (Multiculturalism and Canadian Identity), CPC): Mr. Speaker, I can understand the Liberals' chutzpah when it comes to this kind of tax trick because they got away with it way back in 1993. Remember when they promised to scrap, abolish, eliminate and kill the GST? What did they do? They kept the GST. Canadians have learned they cannot believe Liberals when it comes to taxes.

We can believe one thing. When the Liberals say today that they are going to raise taxes, we can believe that. They are going to raise them by billions of dollars, increasing the price of just about everything for ordinary Canadians. Canadian taxpayers will not buy the tax trick.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order please. There seems to be undue excitement in the chamber at the prospect of the end of the session. I would urge hon. members to calm down somewhat. We have to be able to hear the questions and the responses.

The hon. member for Honoré-Mercier now has the floor.

[Translation]

Mr. Pablo Rodriguez (Honoré-Mercier, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, under our program, the price of gas will not go up. That is a fact. The income supplement for seniors will go up by \$600. That too is a fact. Families will get \$350 per child. That is yet another fact. And what will the Conservatives do in the meantime? They will raise the prices of electricity and natural gas.

So instead of making meaningless comments about our plan, can the Prime Minister tell us how much his so-called action plan will cost?

Hon. Jason Kenney (Secretary of State (Multiculturalism and Canadian Identity), CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am a little confused, because the member claims to be an environmentalist, yet he supports the plan that was introduced today, a plan that does not have a single page dedicated to reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The plan includes 42 pages of tax and price hikes for ordinary citizens, and does not even mention reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Canadians want nothing to do with the Liberals' shell game.

Oral Questions

Mr. Pablo Rodriguez (Honoré-Mercier, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives are trying to scare Canadians, but fear is the weapon of the weak. It is the chosen weapon of those looking for excuses to justify their inaction. Those who do not have the courage to base their debate on the facts choose to run fear campaigns instead. The facts are these: they have given up on the fight against climate change; they are refusing to acknowledge that we must act now; they are mortgaging our children's and grandchildren's future.

Will the Prime Minister admit that his lack of courage and sincerity will end up costing all Canadians dearly?

Hon. Jason Kenney (Secretary of State (Multiculturalism and Canadian Identity), CPC): Mr. Speaker, we agree with the Liberal Party leader's statement that "a carbon tax...is simply bad policy". That is what the Liberal Party leader said just months ago. Why has he changed his mind? Why does he change his mind as often as he changes his shirt?

Yesterday in Montreal, Air Canada laid off 2,000 workers because of the rising cost of airplane fuel. Now the Liberals want to raise the cost of fuel even more.

* * *

BOUNDARY WATERS

Ms. Francine Lalonde (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Mr. Speaker, first it was ecologists, the city of Montreal, the ports of Montreal and Trois-Rivières, shipowners and the Bloc Québécois, and now it is the turn of the Government of Quebec to speak out against the International Joint Commission's new plan for managing water levels and flows in Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence. After the two days of consultation in Montreal and Sorel, the consensus in Quebec is clear: the commission must maintain the status quo.

Will the Minister of Foreign Affairs intervene to stop the commission from adopting its draft order?

•(1440)

[English]

Hon. David Emerson (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Minister of International Trade and Minister for the Pacific Gateway and the Vancouver-Whistler Olympics, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the IJC is in the middle of a consultative process on this very issue. It is receiving submissions from different local and provincial governments. When it has all the information in, it will produce a recommendation. When it produces a recommendation, we will look at it and we will respond in the way which we think best reflects the national interest.

[Translation]

Mr. Guy André (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in response to a question on this subject, the Minister of Foreign Affairs said, "whatever we do will be in the national interest."

What national interest is the minister referring to? The Canadian nation or the Quebec nation? Will he unduly favour Lake Ontario at the risk of completely depleting Lac Saint-Pierre?

[English]

Hon. David Emerson (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Minister of International Trade and Minister for the Pacific Gateway and the Vancouver-Whistler Olympics, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I think the

hon. member knows this probably is not an issue that is of great concern in British Columbia. It is an issue that seems to be focused on the border areas between Ontario and Quebec. I am sure the IJC will come up with the wisdom of Solomon and produce a recommendation that will be good for both Quebec and Ontario.

* * *

[Translation]

GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENTS

Mr. Serge Ménard (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, BQ): Mr. Speaker, usually, when ministers refuse to answer a clear question, it is because they are afraid of telling the truth. I would like to give the leader of the government one last chance today to correct the negative impression he has made in the last few days.

Did the member from Beauce withdraw from the cabinet meeting, as is customary according to ethical guidelines, when the mother of his partner was being appointed chair of the Saint-Jérôme board of referees, yes or no?

[English]

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I think I have made it clear that the nomination of Madame Bellemare was the product of her having applied through a process that human resources has.

Having been through interviews, having satisfied criteria, having then been recommended by the department and the minister responsible, the minister responsible being the Minister of Human Resources and Social Development Canada, that then goes on to cabinet, which makes the ultimate appointment.

* * *

[Translation]

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Serge Ménard (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, BQ): Mr. Speaker, he is really afraid of the truth.

The Conservative Party submitted a list of potential witnesses to the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security in the Couillard affair, including the member for Laurier—Sainte-Marie. Our leader has indicated that he would agree to appear and testify.

Will the Prime Minister do as much and agree to testify? Will he do the honourable thing and have the integrity to appear before the committee?

[English]

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we acted quickly in regard to the question of the classified documents, which is the important public policy issue.

The Prime Minister, on the recommendation of the former foreign affairs minister, asked the foreign affairs department to conduct a full review.

Oral Questions

That is a responsible process. I am not sure that the legislative process will come up with any better results than many of the other circuses that the opposition hold at those legislative committees. So far they have not really turned up anything too interesting.

However, we will focus on the serious review from foreign affairs that will produce the serious results on which the government can act.

* * *

NATIONAL SECURITY

Hon. Ujjal Dosanjh (Vancouver South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there are at least four federal departments implicated in the scandal surrounding the ex-foreign affairs minister and Ms. Couillard. There are secret documents, multi-million dollars contracts, patronage appointments and the infiltration of government by organized crime.

Therefore, it is easy to see why an internal review by foreign affairs is just a diversion and a whitewash.

Will the government stop this cover-up and call a public inquiry today?

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, let us remind Canadians what it is that the member for Vancouver South is afraid is being covered up, the thing on which he wants to hear a public inquiry. He said on CBC and in the *Ottawa Citizen* about Ms. Couillard, "Who else does she have relationships with? I would like to know".

However curious he may be about those questions, we do not think that is a matter of important public policy that justifies a public inquiry, although I am sure he would rather be talking about that this summer than the carbon tax his leader announced today.

•(1445)

Hon. Ujjal Dosanjh (Vancouver South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Ms. Couillard certainly had relationships with organized crime.

Experts have testified before the public safety committee that a foreign affairs review is absolutely inadequate and that it simply will not do the job.

The major players in this matter, the Prime Minister's office, the PCO, the RCMP, CSIS and the national security advisor have been incompetent, muzzled or both.

It is time to end the cover-up. It is time for a public inquiry. Will the government finally act and do it today?

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we do not need to act today. We acted some time ago when we asked foreign affairs to conduct a review and draw on the resources available to do it.

I know the member has a different agenda. He wants to know who has been sleeping with whom. He thinks that is interesting. He thinks it is important public policy.

A former prime minister had a different view. Jean Chrétien's view on privacy was that the marriages, sexual orientation or other private matters of cabinet ministers and prospective cabinet ministers had no

bearing on a minister's ability to serve the public well and that he did not think it was any of his business.

However, those matters are apparently the business of the member for Vancouver South.

* * *

CANADA-U.S. RELATIONS

Hon. Navdeep Bains (Mississauga—Brampton South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we all know the report of the NAFTA-gate leak was a whitewash.

The CTV reporter who spoke to the Prime Minister's chief of staff was never interviewed. Americans with access to the leaked report were never spoken to. The Associated Press who received the leaked memo never even received a call.

The government asserts that this was out of its jurisdiction. Did it call our American allies and ask for help? No.

Is the Prime Minister not concerned that he never found out who leaked the memo?

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are back to that regular Liberal theme of the past year: false Liberal accusations. These are false Liberal accusations where the people involved have been cleared in every case.

In this NAFTA matter, we have already had a review of the matter by the Clerk of the Privy Council and the people were cleared.

Today we saw another false Liberal accusation. It was a false accusation that the Liberals had a green plan, which they released. However, in it there was not one criteria, target or number that related to greenhouse gas reductions. That is another false Liberal accusation.

Hon. Navdeep Bains (Mississauga—Brampton South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the House leader can try to hide behind the flawed Lynch report but there is still a leak in the government.

Today the Prime Minister's chief of staff refused to tell the committee the identities of the mysterious PMO officials who had the report a full day before he did. Like him, they are political staff with the same motives for leaking the information.

Why will the government not reveal these names? How many other PMO staffers are in the witness protection program?

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we had a thorough review by the Clerk of the Privy Council and he cleared everyone of the false Liberal accusations in this case.

Oral Questions

In terms of the witness protection program, I look across the benches and it looks like half of them have voted with their feet to go into the witness protection program after today's carbon tax announcement. I can understand why. It is because when it comes to false Liberal accusations, the leader said today that the Liberal carbon tax plan would be revenue neutral.

What does the Canadian Federation of Independent Business say? It says, "We do not believe that carbon taxes can be truly revenue neutral". The revenue neutrality claim is another false Liberal accusation.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Daryl Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings, CPC): Mr. Speaker, "the plan I will reveal soon to decrease Canada's greenhouse gases will not include a carbon tax", so said the Liberal leader just one year ago and yet today he introduced his plan for a carbon tax, revealing his secret agenda and exposing just a monumental flip-flop.

After breaking this promise, Canadians should not and will not believe his claim that this tax shaft will not affect gas and energy prices or hurt the economy.

Could the government clarify for the Liberal leader and all Canadians just how a carbon tax would impact every Canadian?

Hon. Jason Kenney (Secretary of State (Multiculturalism and Canadian Identity), CPC): Mr. Speaker, it would have an impact on the price of goods at the grocery stores. People would be paying higher prices for groceries because of the new diesel tax on the truckers who bring in those products. People who use electricity would pay more for electricity. The Liberal answer for the poor folks at Air Canada who will be losing their jobs because of high jet fuel prices is that it will be raising fuel prices even further.

It is understandable that the Liberal leader was opposed to a carbon tax, but the strange thing is that so were all of his Liberal leadership contenders: the members for Willowdale, Kings—Hants, Vancouver Centre, Vaughan, Eglinton—Lawrence and Toronto Centre.

* * *

● (1450)

COPYRIGHT ACT

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the government's made in the U.S.A. copyright legislation actually represents a radical rewriting of Canadian copyright policy because the absolute legal protections for digital locks deliberately blurs the distinction between private use and counterfeit.

From here on in, the only consumer rights we will have are the ones the U.S. industry gives us. If we try to protect our rights, it will come after us. It will be legal to back up a movie to VHS but not to a video iPod.

How many 10-year-olds go around with a VHS recorder in their backpack? They are not criminals. Why has the government declared war on Canadian consumers?

Hon. Jim Prentice (Minister of Industry, CPC): Mr. Speaker, nothing could be further from the truth than the assertions my friend makes. If he took the time to read the bill he would see that the educational exemptions, the format shifting exemptions, the time shifting exemptions, the private copying of music exemptions and the provisions relating to statutory damages are all made in Canada.

All of these provisions of the bill are uniquely Canadian. My friend's comments about the U.S.A. DMCA are NDP BS.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order, please. I could not follow all those letters but the last two did not sound polite and I hope the hon. member did not say what I thought I heard because that would not be proper.

The hon. member for Timmins—James Bay.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the minister for eight tracks needs better speaking notes from the U. S. ambassador because he was speaking about the digital law provisions that are leaving average Canadians open to predatory legal action.

Let us look at the American record: lawsuits against 10-year-olds; subpoenas delivered at schools, against stroke victims and against dead people. We cannot put locks on citizens.

The New Democratic Party will fight every step of the way to protect innovators, consumers and artists from this predatory bill and the provisions that are within it.

If the minister will not stand up for Canada, why does he continue to act like a private butler to Ambassador Wilkins?

Hon. Jim Prentice (Minister of Industry, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I think it is only fair for the hon. member to point out that in terms of protecting consumers, this government is protecting consumers. For the first time in Canadian law, format shifting, time shifting and the private copying of music will be permitted. All of that favours the consumers, contrary to what my friend said.

* * *

[Translation]

COURT CHALLENGES PROGRAM

Hon. Marlene Jennings (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, after depriving minorities of the court challenges program for more than 16 months, the government is now announcing that the new program will apply only to linguistic minorities. Once again, the government is showing that it does not really care about minority language communities and would rather use them for political purposes.

Why has this government chosen to politicize a program that is so important to minorities in Canada?

Oral Questions

Hon. Josée Verner (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Status of Women and Official Languages and Minister for La Francophonie, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned this week, the Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne du Canada and the government have reached an out-of-court settlement. The terms of the settlement will be kept confidential for the time being, but very shortly I will be able to disclose the details.

Hon. Marlene Jennings (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government is treating the anglophone linguistic minority, women, gays and lesbians, persons with disabilities, visible minorities and all other minorities like second-class citizens who are not entitled to the same treatment as everyone else.

[English]

Why is the government refusing to allow all minorities to use the program and defend their rights? Why can women, the disabled and visible minorities not use the program?

[Translation]

Hon. Josée Verner (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Status of Women and Official Languages and Minister for La Francophonie, CPC): Mr. Speaker, nothing could be further from the truth. Our government has done a great deal for all Canadians. The member should explain her new green plan to Canadians and tell them about all the taxes they will have to pay.

* * *

MONT TREMBLANT INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

Mr. Marcel Proulx (Hull—Aylmer, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Minister of Public Safety stated that an agreement had been reached between the Canadian government and the Mont Tremblant airport. I can quote him from Hansard: “today I announced that an agreement has been reached with the Mont Tremblant airport.” Yet, today it is being reported that what the minister said is false because no agreement has been reached.

Why did the minister mislead the House? Why does the government continue to confuse matters and refuse to be transparent and responsible when it comes to the Mont Tremblant airport?

• (1455)

[English]

Hon. Stockwell Day (Minister of Public Safety, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I do not know where he is getting his information from.

[Translation]

It is true that we reached an agreement with the airport, with officials. We want the airport to be more competitive and to be able to welcome more international flights. We are happy with the agreement, as are they.

Mr. Marcel Proulx (Hull—Aylmer, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, airport officials are saying the opposite. Yesterday's press release from the Canada Border Services Agency, states that the agreement with the airport includes providing border clearance services for winter chartered flights. But the Mont Tremblant dispute is about regular commercial flights.

Why would the airport work out an agreement with the agency about chartered flights when they were never part of the issue? You

cannot come to an agreement about a conflict that does not exist. Can the minister clarify what he believes to be the nature of the agreement reached with the airport?

Hon. Stockwell Day (Minister of Public Safety, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will say it again. There was a situation in which the airport had to make payments. We came to an agreement that could make the airport more competitive and allow it to continue its operations. The agreement is clear.

Once again, I do not know where he is getting his information from. Maybe he would understand the situation if he spoke to the officials involved.

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REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Jean-Yves Roy (Haute-Gaspésie—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Mr. Speaker, François Bourque, a columnist for *Le Soleil*, summed up the exasperation registered throughout Quebec by comparing the Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec's absurd decision to slash funding for non-profit organizations to a sort of scorched earth policy—scorched, blackened earth. The columnist also pointed out that all governments in Europe and the United States support such economic development organizations.

Will the “scorched earth” minister come to his senses and restore the funding for these organizations?

Hon. Jean-Pierre Blackburn (Minister of Labour and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Economic Development Canada has the same budget, that is, around \$200 million a year. We continue to support these organizations for one-time projects. Others have submitted transition plans. In fact, we have already signed several transition plans with several organizations.

That member would do better to ask his head office in Quebec City if the Government of Quebec did indeed receive \$242 million more for the Department of Economic Development, Innovation and Export. Will they continue to support these organizations?

* * *

TQS BROADCASTING

Ms. Christiane Gagnon (Québec, BQ): Mr. Speaker, representatives of the CSN in Quebec City attempted unsuccessfully to meet with the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Status of Women and Official Languages to ask for her support in their fight to have TQS keep its newsroom. Remstar has presented a new plan—a slap in the face to Quebec regions—offering just ten minutes of regional news, five days a week.

Does the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Status of Women and Official Languages intend to represent the interests of Quebec and advise the CRTC that a general interest television service must have a real news service?

Oral Questions

Hon. Josée Verner (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Status of Women and Official Languages and Minister for La Francophonie, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as soon we heard about the TQS situation, I went to meet the employees at TQS. I assured them of my support. The CRTC is conducting a review and we will let the CRTC do its work.

* * *

[English]

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Ms. Joyce Murray (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Kelowna Accord Implementation Act received royal assent and became law. This means that the Conservatives must finally honour the accord they have shamefully ignored for the past two years.

Cancelling Kelowna has meant that improvements have not been made which would have ensured that aboriginal peoples have access to the same quality of health care, education and housing that other Canadians enjoy. Apparently that is not important to members opposite.

If the government was sincere in its apology last week, it will uphold this new law. Will the minister confirm his government will—

• (1500)

Hon. Chuck Strahl (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have made huge progress on issues that are important to first nations, aboriginal and Inuit people. We will be celebrating National Aboriginal Day this Saturday from coast to coast.

This government has made progress on specific claims, on drinking water, on tripartite agreements on education and family services, on human rights protection, and on economic development, as well as the apology for the residential schools era.

We have made a lot of progress, but I must warn the House that a lot of that progress is at risk if the Liberals go ahead with their carbon tax. Did they consult with aboriginal people? Is there a word about aboriginal people in their document? There is not a single word. The Liberals want to get the gold mine. Aboriginal people will get the shaft.

* * *

HUMAN RESOURCES AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Mike Lake (Edmonton—Mill Woods—Beaumont, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the NDP has now delayed debate on its own child care bill seven times over the past six months. NDP members obviously know that it has zero support from the provinces and in fact would hurt many Canadian families. Canadian parents can see right through the NDP rhetoric on child care.

In reality, it is this Conservative government that is offering the widest range of child care options. It is this Conservative government that has given the provinces the freedom to create the types of spaces that meet their needs.

Can the Minister of Human Resources please update Canadians on the achievements of this government in child care and the effect the NDP bill would have on this progress?

Hon. Monte Solberg (Minister of Human Resources and Social Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the NDP plan would be devastating. In fact, that is why those members have not brought it forward thus far. They have had months to bring it forward. NDP members have so little faith in it that they keep delaying the debate.

What is surprising, though, is that the Bloc members seem to accept that this is an area of federal responsibility and they actually support it. That is very strange.

However, what would not help, of course, is to implement a carbon tax and raise the heating costs in all the day care centres across the country. That is the Liberal plan. We are not going to go there.

* * *

[Translation]

OIL SANDS SECTOR

Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP): Mr. Speaker, an Alberta based company involved in oil sands operations refuses to hire francophones from Atlantic Canada under the pretext that they cannot understand the safety test in English. In the meantime, this same company is hiring foreign workers who do not speak either French or English and it is even providing them with interpreters.

Will this government take action against these companies that are using cheap labour and not respecting workers' rights? Why are the Conservatives accepting this practice?

[English]

Hon. Jim Prentice (Minister of Industry, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I just do not buy the assertions that the hon. member is putting forward. The oil sands are one of the real centres of employment in the Canadian economy. There are jobs there for people from right across this country.

In fact, everywhere that any of us go and speak in Canada, we hear about the success stories of Canadians who have gone there, who have done well, who have succeeded, and who have gone home to their communities and made this a stronger country.

Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the reason that Atlantic Canadians are being turned down is so the big oil companies can move faster on their cheap labour strategy, aided and abetted by the Conservative government.

Yesterday we learned that Chinese temporary foreign workers in the tar sands were paid one-eighth of what Canadians get for doing the same work. Another report from B.C. found that migrant workers in Canada are “under conditions that amount to indentured servitude”.

Will the government commit to halting these exploitative programs and adopt the UN convention on the rights of migrant workers? Will it stop this atrocious exploitation of workers?

Points of Order

Hon. Monte Solberg (Minister of Human Resources and Social Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are always concerned whenever there is an accusation that temporary foreign workers are having their rights abused. In law, of course, they have the same rights as all Canadians.

This government has moved in a number of ways to ensure that those rights are protected, including providing them with information in their own language so they know who they can go to for help and establishing memorandums of understanding so we can share information with the provinces. The provinces have stepped up with more monitoring.

We are there to protect the rights of all Canadians as well as those rights of temporary foreign workers.

* * *

PRESENCE IN GALLERY

The Speaker: I would like to draw to the attention of hon. members the presence in the gallery of the Honourable Peter Kilabuk, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Nunavut.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

• (1505)

Ms. Libby Davies: Mr. Speaker, there have been discussions among the parties and I believe you would find unanimous consent for the House now to revert to the two rubrics of questions on the order paper and petitions.

The Speaker: Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Speaker: There is no consent.

* * *

[*Translation*]

POINTS OF ORDER

TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

Mr. Marcel Proulx (Hull—Aylmer, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, you heard the Minister of Public Safety say that an agreement had been reached on something that does not appear to exist. I would therefore ask the minister to table a copy of the agreement he is referring to.

[*English*]

Hon. Stockwell Day (Minister of Public Safety, CPC): Mr. Speaker, barring some legal requirement, which I cannot foresee, I will be happy to do that.

The Speaker: The minister has given his assurance.

[*Translation*]

The hon. member for Laval also wishes to raise a point of order.

Ms. Nicole Demers: Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to adopt the following motion: That, notwithstanding any standing order or usual practices of this House, the amendments made by the Senate to Bill C-280, An Act to amend the Immigration and Refugee

Protection Act (coming into force of sections 110, 111 and 171) be deemed to have been read a second time and concurred in.

The Speaker: Does the hon. member for Laval have the unanimous consent of the House to move this motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Speaker: There is no unanimous consent.

There is another point of order. The hon. member for Ottawa South.

[*English*]

TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

Mr. David McGuinty (Ottawa South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, throughout question period, the Secretary of State for Multiculturalism referred to a document called the “Green Shift”. I would welcome him tabling the “Green Shift” in English and in French, as both copies are available for Canadians, or as an alternative, Canadians can also go to www.thegreenshift.ca.

The Speaker: I am not sure the minister quoted from it, but perhaps he did.

Hon. Jason Kenney (Secretary of State (Multiculturalism and Canadian Identity), CPC): No, actually, Mr. Speaker, I did not quote from it. I referred to it. I would be very happy to table it. The more Canadians who see it the happier I would be.

I did read from one document, which was a citation from the Leader of the Opposition saying that a carbon tax is simply “bad policy”. I would be delighted to table that.

Ms. Jean Crowder: Mr. Speaker, I rise to ask for unanimous consent for the following motion: that Canada's specific claims policy indicates that the government will buy property from willing sellers to return land to first nations that was not properly surrendered; therefore, if a first nation desires that option, as is the case with the Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte and the Culbertson tract, surrender of the disputed lands cannot be the only option the government will offer to settle the land claim.

The Speaker: Does the hon. member for Nanaimo—Cowichan have the unanimous consent of the House to propose this motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Speaker: There is no consent.

Is the hon. member for Vancouver East rising on another point of order?

Ms. Libby Davies: Mr. Speaker, it is the same point of order. I think if you now seek unanimous consent you would find that there is agreement to revert to the two rubrics of questions on the order paper and petitions.

The Speaker: Is there unanimous consent to proceed in this way?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1510)

[English]

PETITIONS

DARFUR

Mr. Maurice Vellacott (Saskatoon—Wanuskewin, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the petition that I have in hand here reminds us that since 2003 over 400,000 people have been killed and 2.5 million displaced in the horrific conflict taking place in Sudan.

This petition also stresses Canada's responsibility as a prosperous and internationally engaged country to play a leading role to save the people of Darfur from ongoing death and displacement. The appeal of these petitioners to the Government of Canada, then, is to engage with the international community in whatever way is necessary to end these ongoing atrocities.

JUSTICE

Hon. Karen Redman (Kitchener Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table a petition calling for the halt of the extradition of Stuart B. Collins, farm owner and resident of Shawville, Potiatic County in Quebec. It is signed by many concerned citizens.

[Translation]

DARFUR

Ms. Francine Lalonde (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Mr. Speaker, today, I am tabling petitions from people in Quebec, Ontario and elsewhere in Canada, calling on the Government of Canada to take action to stop the humanitarian disaster in Darfur and work with the international community to put an end to these atrocities. Since 2003, more than 400,000 people have been killed, and 2.5 million people have been displaced.

[English]

OIL AND GAS OMBUDSMAN

Ms. Chris Charlton (Hamilton Mountain, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to table a petition in the House of Commons today on behalf of a large number of people who are concerned about the skyrocketing gasoline prices and the fact that the government is doing nothing to help ordinary working families who are getting hosed at the pumps.

They believe that my private member's bill, Bill C-442, which calls for the creation of an oil and gas ombudsman, would provide strong, effective consumer protection to make sure no big business could swindle, cheat or rip off hard-working Canadians. The petitioners therefore call upon the Parliament of Canada to give speedy passage to Bill C-442 to help consumers fight the gas price squeeze.

OIL AND GAS INDUSTRY

Mr. Ron Cannan (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I wish to table a petition on behalf of grade 10 student, Miss Stefanie LaForce, from Sir Robert Borden High School in Nepean, Ontario, and 114 other signatories. In order to protect the essential habitats of polar bears, belugas and bowhead whales, the petitioners call upon the Government of Canada to create a

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management plan in relation to selling gas and oil development rights in Canada's Arctic.

CBC RADIO ORCHESTRA

Mr. Don Bell (North Vancouver, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present six petitions today: the first from Ruth and W.G. Powell, signed by 85 others; the second by Gloria Doubleday, signed by 26 others; the third by Dee Fitzpatrick, signed by 85 others; the fourth by John McBain, signed by 26 others; the fifth by Yvette Bos, signed by 26 others; and the sixth by Ken Fletcher, signed by 52 others. All are concerned over the disbanding of the CBC Radio Orchestra.

Based in Vancouver, the orchestra is a beloved Canadian cultural institution that has enriched the lives of Canadians for over 70 years by giving Canadian musicians and composers a place on the stages of Canada and the world. The petitioners call on the government to ensure a continued mandate and adequate funding for CBC/Radio-Canada to allow it to continue its contribution to the cultural life of Canada, including a strong and renewed commitment to classical music and to accord the Vancouver based CBC Radio Orchestra national cultural heritage status.

[Translation]

CHARTER OF THE FRENCH LANGUAGE

Mr. Richard Nadeau (Gatineau, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am tabling a petition signed by 38 Quebecers who want the Government of Canada to respect the nation of Quebec and Bill 101 in a tangible way.

[English]

PASSPORT SERVICES

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am very honoured to rise on behalf of the good citizens of the region of Timmins—James Bay, which, by the way, is the only geographic region in the country that does not have walk-in passport service, unlike, for example, northwestern Ontario. There are hundreds of signatures on this petition and add to the hundreds of signatures that have already been presented of people who are very concerned about the lack of walk-in passport service, particularly the needs of people in regions that are dependent on mining and exploration and who travel internationally.

They are looking to the government to address the shortage of passport services in rural areas, particularly northeastern Ontario. This is very much in line with the report that the Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates has just delivered to the House. I am very pleased to present this petition on behalf of the citizens of my region.

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UNBORN VICTIMS OF CRIME

Mr. Leon Benoit (Vegreville—Wainwright, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to present this petition wherein the petitioners note that under current federal law an unborn child is not recognized as a victim of violent crimes. They go on to note that a vast majority of the public supports law that protects unborn children from acts of violence and that forcing upon a pregnant woman the death or injury of her unborn child is a violation of a woman's right to give life to and protect her child.

They therefore call upon Parliament to enact legislation which would recognize unborn children as separate victims when they are injured or killed during the commission of an offence against their mothers.

• (1515)

CBC RADIO ORCHESTRA

Mr. Bill Siksay (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to table a petition signed by thousands of Canadians who stand on guard for the CBC.

The petitioners are concerned by CBC/Radio-Canada's decision to disband a venerable national institution based in Vancouver, the CBC Radio Orchestra, and the reduced commitment by CBC/Radio-Canada to classical music.

In that regard, the petitioners call on the government to ensure that CBC/Radio-Canada is well funded so that it can fulfill its mandate, to recommend to the CBC/Radio-Canada board of directors that the long-standing commitment to the CBC Radio Orchestra be maintained with sustained and substantial funding and a mandate for 10 years, and that CBC/Radio-Canada's mandate include a strong and permanent commitment to classical and concert music.

UNBORN VICTIMS OF CRIME

Mr. Ken Epp (Edmonton—Sherwood Park, CPC): Mr. Speaker, once again I have a whole handful of petitions. These are in support of Bill C-484, the unborn victims of crime act.

The 1,523 people who signed this particular group of petitions are pretty well all from Markham and Scarborough. They support the legislation. They want Parliament to enact legislation that recognizes it is just wrong to force upon a pregnant woman the death or injury of her unborn child and that this is a violation of a woman's right to protect and give life to her child.

The petitioners urge that the legislation be passed. Of course I am delighted to present their petition in the House on their behalf.

ARTS AND CULTURE

Ms. Jean Crowder (Nanaimo—Cowichan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to present a petition from various signatories calling on Parliament to staunchly defend Canadian artistic and cultural expression and to rescind any provisions of Bill C-10 which allow the government to censor film and video production in Canada and to ensure that the government has in place objective and transparent guidelines that respect freedom of expression when delivering any program intended to support film and video production in Canada.

CBC RADIO ORCHESTRA

Ms. Peggy Nash (Parkdale—High Park, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table petitions on behalf of many concerned citizens who have expressed opposition to the CBC's decision to disband the CBC Radio Orchestra.

The petitioners believe that this 70-year-old institution which has brought so much joy to Canadians across the country is an institution worth protecting. They are very concerned that there was no public consultation on this decision. They are calling for ongoing sustained funding to restore the CBC Radio Orchestra.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Mrs. Joy Smith (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table two petitions signed by people from coast to coast to coast across Canada who call on the government to continue its work on stopping the horrendous crime of human trafficking in our country.

ELECTORAL REFORM

Ms. Catherine Bell (Vancouver Island North, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present three petitions today from members of my constituency and from across Vancouver Island.

The petitioners who signed the first petition want Canada to reform its electoral system. They are tired of the first past the post system that has been around for over 100 years, since before women were considered persons under the law and before aboriginal people and non-property owners were entitled to vote.

The petitioners want the government to have the broad consultation across the country that we have not had. They call on the Government of Canada to follow up on the report that recommended real cross-country consultations on electoral reform.

• (1520)

TERMINATOR TECHNOLOGY

Ms. Catherine Bell (Vancouver Island North, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the second petition is from constituents from all over British Columbia. They are concerned about the use of terminator technology, which is genetic engineering designed to render seeds sterile at harvest and prevent farmers from saving and replanting the seeds. The use of these genetically engineered seeds will impact farmers' livelihoods, food security and crop genetic diversity.

The petitioners call on Parliament to legislate a permanent ban on terminator technology to ensure that these seeds are never planted, field tested, patented or commercialized in Canada.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Catherine Bell (Vancouver Island North, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the third petition is from approximately 130 of my constituents who are concerned about the environment. They know that the impacts of climate change will be catastrophic and that we must act to reduce our greenhouse gases immediately.

The petitioners call on the government, which has no plans to do so, to reduce our greenhouse gases, to honour our legal commitments to the Kyoto treaty and to further reduce Canada's greenhouse gas emissions.

JUSTICE

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am tabling a petition today that has been signed by over 250 of the residents of Pontiac County, Quebec. Over 3,000 individuals in that area of Shawville and Pontiac County have signed copies of this petition.

The petitioners call on the Government of Canada to halt the extradition of Stuart B. Collins, a local business person. He has been involved in the community and has hired dozens of people in this particular area of Shawville, Quebec.

He is being extradited under dubious, to say the least, justification. As we know, the minister and the government can intervene to halt that extradition.

These hundreds of petitioners from Pontiac County call on the government to do just that.

IMMIGRATION

Ms. Olivia Chow (Trinity—Spadina, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have petitions signed by people from Ottawa, Quebec, Montreal, Vancouver, Toronto, and other parts of Canada.

The petitioners call on the government to deal with the immigration backlog by increasing the staff in overseas visa offices and to also increase the immigration target to 1% of the Canadian population, or 330,000 new residents. Doing so would facilitate family reunification and would also meet labour needs.

The petitioners also call on the government to stop the expansion of the temporary foreign workers category. These petitioners are extremely concerned that temporary foreign workers have very limited labour rights and have an uncertain future in Canada. They feel that immigrants should be nation building rather than being used as cheap labour for big corporations.

CONSUMER PRICE INDEX

Mr. David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present a petition from my constituents in Hamilton Centre who are troubled that Statistics Canada's error in calculating the consumer price index resulted in lost revenues for Canadians who are on fixed incomes, like CPP, old age security and the guaranteed income supplement. These are incomes that are directly tied to Statistics Canada's calculations.

The petitioners call on the Conservative government to take full responsibility for this error and to take every step necessary to repay every Canadian who was shortchanged by this egregious error.

CBC RADIO ORCHESTRA

Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present two petitions.

The first petition is from people in Vancouver and the Lower Mainland who are very concerned about the elimination of the CBC Radio Orchestra. It is the last such orchestra in North America. It has

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been around for 70 years, providing wonderful music and programs to Canadians across the country.

The petitioners call on the Government of Canada and the House of Commons to reconsider the decision of the CBC and ask for the reinstatement of the CBC Radio Orchestra. They also point out that the CBC, as a public institution, should have consulted with the Canadian public before making such a decision of national importance.

SECURITY AND PROSPERITY PARTNERSHIP

Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the second petition is a call to suspend the security and prosperity partnership of North America, often called the SPP. The petition is signed by people in the Lower Mainland.

The petitioners call upon the Government of Canada to stop further implementation of the security and prosperity partnership of North America until there has been a democratic mandate from the people of Canada, parliamentary oversight, and consideration of its profound consequences on Canada's existence as a sovereign nation.

The Speaker: The hon. member for Winnipeg Centre, very briefly.

Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have three separate petitions on three different subjects, and I will be very brief.

The first petition is signed by thousands of Canadians from all across the country.

The petitioners call upon Parliament to suspend the security and prosperity partnership or continental integration strategy currently ongoing. They point out that the SPP encompasses over 300 wide-ranging initiatives but yet is going on without the scrutiny, oversight or even mandate from any of the people of Canada, the United States or Mexico.

● (1525)

The Speaker: The 15 minutes for presenting petitions have expired. That is why I urged the hon. member to brief. He can do them, but he will have to be very quick.

FEDERAL MINIMUM WAGE

Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): I see, Mr. Speaker. I will be quick.

The second petition, put forward by hundreds of Canadians and regarding the federal minimum wage, calls upon the Parliament of Canada to ensure that the workers in the federal jurisdiction are paid a fair minimum wage by passing the NDP private member's bill, Bill C-375, which would establish a federal minimum wage and set it at \$10 an hour.

RAIL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY

Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the last petition I have to present is regarding rail transportation safety.

Routine Proceedings

The petitioners point out that CN Rail's trains traverse Canada with dangerous commodities, that Transport Canada concluded an audit of CN's safety management system, but the audit has never been made public. Therefore, these many Canadians are calling upon Parliament to make public the contents of Transport Canada's audit of CN's safety management system.

* * *

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, the following question will be answered today: No. 267.

[Text]

Question No. 267—**Mr. Dennis Bevington:**

With regard to the world-class arctic research station mentioned in the Speech from the Throne opening the Second Session of the 39th Parliament: (a) what is the anticipated cost; (b) which Northern communities are being considered for the location of the station; (c) when will the final selection be made for the location; (d) when will the station be included in the government's budget plans; (e) what types of scientific research will be supported by the station; and (f) will the station be part of existing arctic scientific research facilities such as the Aurora Research Institute in Inuvik, Northwest Territories?

Hon. Chuck Strahl (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada's world-class Arctic research station, part of our government's northern strategy, will help position our country as the global leader in Arctic science research. We are committed to ensure that northerners will be involved in and benefit from this important project.

Planning for the station is now in preliminary stages, including consultations and analysis of possible options for infrastructure and logistics, a science program, governance and location. The design and development of the station will be driven by the science priorities for Canada.

In response to a) An estimated cost for the station cannot be identified until more analysis is done regarding the infrastructure and logistics, science program, governance and location.

In response to b) A site location for the research station has not yet been determined. We are presently undertaking operational research to analyze location options.

In response to c) We hope that analysis and discussion with key stakeholders will yield a location recommendation in the coming months.

In response to d) The development of an Arctic research station is a multi-year initiative, as is the case with any large infrastructure project, but we hope to undertake initial feasibility studies over the next year which will also then help with future financial estimates and planning.

In response to e) A process has been launched to define Canada's global advantage in Arctic science. The results of this process will provide key information for the Arctic science priorities in Canada and the science and technology program for the station. As part of this process, we recently convened a workshop with representatives

from federal and territorial governments, universities, colleges, northern and aboriginal organizations and industry to discuss Arctic science priorities for Canada. The discussion considered varied scientific activities and disciplines including natural, physical, social and health sciences. The next step in this process is an international validation of Canada's priorities for Arctic science.

In response to f) Analysis is underway now to provide options for an optimal model and governance structure for the station. This analysis includes consideration of the existing capacity for Arctic scientific research in Canada.

* * *

[English]

QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS

Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, if Question Nos. 265 and 277 could be made orders for returns, these returns would be tabled immediately.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[Text]

Question No. 265—**Ms. Dawn Black:**

With regard to government involvement with the Evergreen Light Rail Transit Project: (a) what funds have been committed to the project; (b) what are the expected costs to the government; (c) which department is responsible; (d) what is the expected timeline; (e) what is the amount of money that will be approved in grants; (f) what amount will be in loans; (g) what consultations have been carried out with (i) the government of British Columbia, (ii) municipal governments, (iii) local residents, (iv) local businesses, (v) local post-secondary institutions; (h) what construction techniques have been committed to the project; (i) what is the expected length of track that is being built; (j) what environmental impact studies have been either commissioned or reviewed; (k) how will merchants along the Evergreen line be compensated for disruption to their businesses; (l) what research is the government using for estimates of ridership along the line; (m) what will be the revenue source if ridership numbers are below those expected; (n) will construction of the line be constructed at grade or below through Port Moody; (o) what efforts have been made to enhance security at stations; (p) will the line be fully integrated with the existing system allowing for continuous travel from Port Moody to Commercial Drive; (q) what efforts have been made to ensure that environmentally sensitive lands, such as Miller Park Ravine are protected; (r) what negotiations have taken place with Canadian Pacific Railway Limited; (s) is the government considering using a P3 model for the project; and (t) does the government have any plans with regard to foreign workers and the project?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 277—**Mr. Rick Dykstra:**

With regard to the tax reductions introduced by the government since the beginning of 2006, how much less in taxes could a retired couple over the age of 65 with combined income of \$40,200 (with one spouse having a private pension income of \$23,000, \$11,490 in income from Canada Pension Plan and Old Age Security (OAS) payments, and the other spouse having an income of \$5,710 in OAS payments) save as a result of: (a) the introduction of pension income splitting; (b) the increase in the age credit; (c) the increase in the pension income credit; (d) the reduction in the goods and services tax; (e) the increase in the basic personal exemption; (f) the reduction of personal income tax rates; (g) the increase in the refundable medical expense supplement, if eligible expenses are \$2,000; (h) the introduction of the public transit tax credit, if the cost of a monthly pass is \$42; (i) the increase in the maximum amount eligible for the spouse or common-law partner credit; and (j) the Tax-Free Savings Account?

Points of Order

(Return tabled)

[*English*]

Mr. Tom Lukiwski: Mr. Speaker, I ask that all remaining questions be allowed to stand.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

POINTS OF ORDER

ORAL QUESTIONS

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, during the cut and thrust of question period, as you have pointed out, the Minister of Industry used very unparliamentary language. He used the street vernacular that referred to questions I asked to be of little more than animal excrement. I understand that perhaps he was a bit frazzled or thrown off his game, but it certainly lessens the tone of Parliament.

The reason I am asking this personally, Mr. Speaker, because I know you did raise it, but you will remember well the case when over the issue of Kashechewan, when he was the Indian affairs minister, I challenged him and I used that exact term. He demanded a personal apology in the House because he said that it cheapened his work. At the time, I felt what I said was totally correct. However, I did think about it, I spoke with you, I came back and I apologize to the House. I do believe we have a role, as parliamentarians, to maintain a certain decorum.

I would like the Minister of Industry to do the same thing, to come back and make a personal apology because we cannot have this kind of cheapening of debate and this kind of language.

The Speaker: I am sure, when the minister reappears, he will have something to say on the subject. I hope he will listen to the very sage advice from the hon. member on this subject. He noted that I raised the issue and I am sure it was the right thing to do.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have an item that I would have liked to address in the Thursday question, but did not have an opportunity to do so.

We are nearing the end of the session before the summer break. At this opportunity, I want to take the time to thank the staff of the House of Commons, the Journals Branch and all others who work very hard to make things work well.

I particularly want to thank those who were involved in the aboriginal schools apology and other special things that happened in the past year, for example, the demands that were put on the House staff in accommodating committee of the whole in the fall when we dealt with our isotopes issue.

Mr. Speaker, you and your staff and also the staff of the House of Commons have gone above and beyond in accommodating these things. We want to thank them.

I also particularly want to thank the pages, many of whom are here for their last time today. They do outstanding work. I know it is a wonderful and positive experience for them. My wife was a page back in 1987 and still recalls it as the best year of her life. I have taken the opportunity to take several former pages on to my staff. They have also performed in an outstanding fashion, having obviously learned a great deal from the program.

We all appreciate the great work the pages do. At this time, before they depart for the summer, I want to let them know that I think each and every member of Parliament appreciates their efforts.

● (1530)

Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, as the House leader for the NDP, I would like to thank the government House leader for his very pleasing remarks.

We certainly would like to echo them and say thank you to yourself, as the Speaker, and all of your staff, the table officers and the pages who serve us so well.

We get pretty frazzled in the House and we have a lot of debate. Sometimes things go a bit crazy, but it is very good that we take a moment as well to be cooperative and to thank those who make this place work and allow us to do our job.

On behalf of the NDP, I would add our voice and wish everybody a very good summer break. Again, thanks to all the employees and workers in the House of Commons who serve us so well so we can do our job.

Hon. Karen Redman (Kitchener Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I, too, on behalf of my Liberal colleagues, would like to commend the table officers, the pages and yourself, being our referee in the House, to ensure we get the business of Canadians done.

From time to time, all of us have members from our communities who come to Ottawa and tour Parliament. I always think it bears as a very good reminder for me personally of what an historic place this is and how very important this institution of democracy is in defining who we have been historically, who we are today, the rules and the legislation we deal with and who we will be in the future.

It is a distinct honour to be part of this assemblage. I wish everyone a rest and a good summer. I know most of us will be back working in our ridings, as you will be, Mr. Speaker. It has been terrific having the pages ensure that things go forward. I again commend the table officers and the Clerk for doing such an outstanding job of interpreting the rules for us.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Pauline Picard (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Bloc Québécois, I would also like to join the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons in thanking the pages, clerks and all those who help ensure the House runs smoothly. I would also like to wish you, Mr. Speaker, a good summer.

The Speaker: I thank all the hon. members who rose on these points of order. On behalf of all the employees of the House who help us here, I thank them for their kind words.

Government Orders

[English]

I assure them that I wish the same for all our employees, a very pleasant summer and I hope they get some relaxation. I hope hon. members do too, and maybe we will start sooner than later. However, in any event, I guess it is orders of the day now.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

NUCLEAR LIABILITY AND COMPENSATION ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-5, An Act respecting civil liability and compensation for damage in case of a nuclear incident, be read the third time and passed, and of the motion that this question be now put.

The Speaker: Before question period the hon. member for British Columbia Southern Interior had the floor and there are seven and a half minutes remaining in the time allotted for his remarks.

I therefore call upon the hon. member for British Columbia Southern Interior.

[Translation]

Mr. Alex Atamanenko (British Columbia Southern Interior, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am a little disappointed that there are not more members here when they knew that I would be making this speech. In any case, I will do my best. I know that the members who stayed are very interested in what I have to say.

In the first part of my speech, I was trying to give an overview of our environmental plan. I was talking about how we can avoid the nuclear industry by creating green jobs. Before going on, I would like to put all of this in the context of what I call political will.

Anything that comes from the government, such as bills and so on, can sometimes diminish the government's power and give more powers to large, multinational companies. What I am seeing is a struggle between big business and the will of the people. Bill C-5 is an example, because it sets a limit of \$650 million, instead of truly protecting people and society.

I would also like to point out that this is all going on in the context of what I call the Friedman philosophy, which talks of privatization, deregulation and a government that is pulling out of programs for which it is responsible.

• (1535)

[English]

Before I continue, I would like to share with my colleagues a book, which no doubt some of them have read and if they have not, I am sure it would be good, depressing bedtime reading. The book is entitled *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism* by Naomi Klein, in which she outlines exactly what I have been trying to get at, the role of the corporate sector in dismantling our societies, not only in our country but in the rest of the world.

In case I do not have time to continue in outlining our plan for the environment, I would like to give a few examples of what has

happened in other countries of the world with regard to the nuclear industry.

For example, on April 10, 2003, in Hungary, partially spent fuel rods undergoing cleaning in a tank of heavy water ruptured and spilled fuel pellets at Paks Nuclear Power Plant. It is expected that inadequate cooling of the rods during the cleaning process, combined with a sudden influx of cold water, thermally shocked the fuel rods, causing them to split. Boric acid was added to the tank to prevent the loose fuel pellets from achieving criticality. Ammonia and hydrazine were also added to absorb iodine.

On April 19, 2005, in Sellafield in the United Kingdom, there was a nuclear material leak. Twenty metric tonnes of uranium and 160 kilograms of plutonium, dissolved in 83,000 litres of nitric acid, leaked over several months from a cracked pipe into a stainless steel subchamber at the THORP nuclear fuel reprocessing plant. The partially processed spent fuel was drained into holding tanks outside the plant.

Most recently, on March 6, 2006, in Erwin, Tennessee, 35 litres of a highly enriched uranium solution leaked during transfer into a lab at the Nuclear Fuel Services Erwin plant. The incident caused a seven month shutdown and required a public hearing on the licensing of the plant.

What we are seeing is the nuclear industry is by no means 100% safe. The fact that even if there is the slightest accident, this can cause havoc on the environment. As I was trying to point out earlier in my speech, this can cause irreparable damage also to the health of individuals.

There is an alternative, and I started to outline this alternative in my speech just before being stopped. At that time, I was speaking about the fact that, in addition to establishing a cap and trade system, we could create green jobs and also continue to make sustainable consumer choices more affordable.

We need a national energy plan that would make a better building retrofit and energy efficient strategy, which would constitute a groundbreaking, historic construction project for Canada in every community, creating thousands of new local jobs, making Canada a world leader in building efficiency skills in technology.

I referred to the fact that a few months ago, a Canadian solar power company was forced to set up shop in Germany because Germany was providing the Canadian company with incentives to develop this industry, where there were no incentives in our country. This is really a shame on our future and on our country, that we are not able to promote clean, efficient energy in our country.

I would like to go further and say that there are now approximately 12.5 million homes in Canada. Green Communities, an environmental organization involved extensively in residential home audits and retrofits, estimates that home energy efficiency improvements can result in greenhouse gas savings of four tonnes a year per house.

Government Orders

What is our strategy? Our strategy is a new program for retrofitting low income homes to replace the program that was cancelled by the government. We also want to expand and revamp the co-energy programs by providing low interest loans and improved grants for energy efficient home and building retrofits, modelled on the city of Toronto's successful better building partnership using revolving funds.

● (1540)

We also feel that we should amend the Canadian building code to add energy conservation and efficiency to the criteria.

Mr. Bradley Trost: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The legislation that we are currently debating today deals with nuclear liability not with energy efficiency, so I will challenge the hon. member to demonstrate relevance with his remarks as he is going on about the NDP energy efficiency plan.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Andrew Scheer): The hon. member for British Columbia Southern Interior only has about 35 seconds left in his time slot, but I will remind him that at third reading a member's speech is supposed to be confined to the actual legislative properties of the bill. In the last half minute that he has remaining, I would ask him to tie his remarks to the bill before the House. That would be appreciated by the House.

Mr. Alex Atamanenko: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my hon. colleague for reminding me of that. I just got so involved and excited about this wonderful plan that we have that I just could not help but talk about it. With respect to Bill C-5, we have to be very careful. It is not advantageous for our country to adopt this bill the way it currently stands.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Conservatives are trying to walk the clock down here. They say there is no reason we should be talking about a plan for conserving energy because we should be talking about liability. That strikes to the very heart of why there is such a mistrust of the Conservative government.

Conservative members are so into promoting big energy projects at whatever cost. They are basically opening up Canada as the energy powerhouse for the U.S. market despite serious concerns as opposed to what my hon. colleague was talking about. He spoke of the need to move energy away from one or two huge megaprojects projects and diffuse it where it would leave a much smaller environmental impact and would actually be more sustainable.

I would like to ask my hon. colleague what he thinks is behind the Conservative lust, whether it is the pillaging of the tar sands, or whether it is the selling of the nukes to any private company that comes along to create these megaprojects that have a massive impact? The average citizen has to wonder whether the Conservative Party is basically just a hand puppet for the oil and gas sector and now the nuclear industry.

Perhaps my colleague could explain to us why he thinks there is this particular predilection for big energy and irresponsible energy projects in the Conservative mindset?

Mr. Alex Atamanenko: Mr. Speaker, I believe our challenge in the 21st century is between the corporate sector, the banking sector and those that put pressure on elected officials, and on the other hand, the ability of elected officials to continue serving people by

making wise, constructive policy decisions. I have stated this before and I stated it last night when I was participating in a food security forum in Renfrew.

What is driving the government's agenda is corporate influence that exploits at all costs, that pollutes our lakes as we heard today in question period. The corporate sector does not worry about selling our energy to the United States. It continues to funnel cheap energy to the United States while at the same time importing 90% of oil east of Ottawa, which we are currently doing and which makes absolutely no sense. The reason this is happening is the fact that there is no political will to have some kind of national strategy for green energy. We need to ensure that we do not follow along in the corporate footsteps.

● (1545)

Mr. Laurie Hawn (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will be really brief because I just cannot stand this anymore. Does the hon. member have any idea that the oil patch contributes directly and indirectly 500,000 jobs in Canada? Does he have any idea or appreciation of the fact that his pension plan and every pension plan in Canada depends on investments in the oil patch to pay out the kind of income Canadians need in their retirement? Does he care about any of that or is this just simply more NDP baloney?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Andrew Scheer): I will go to the hon. member for British Columbia Southern Interior, but questions and comments should be relevant to the bill before the House.

Mr. Alex Atamanenko: Mr. Speaker, I think it is important, and I will mention this, that it is possible to have industry in this country, but this industry has to come under the surveillance of the elected representatives.

The fact that we have uncontrolled pollution in the oil sands is not acceptable. The fact that it is providing jobs certainly helps our economy, but there are also foreign jobs that are taking away jobs from Canadians. I think any megaproject has to have oversight and we have to look at it step by step to ensure that it serves our best interests and not the interests of those big oil corporations.

Ms. Catherine Bell (Vancouver Island North, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I enjoyed the member's speech on the NDP's energy plan. I think it was very interesting. The other hon. member also talked about the oil sands.

I sit on the natural resources committee. We visited and did a study on the oil sands. The Minister of Natural Resources, at one point, said that nuclear might be a way to go because it is a clean source of energy, as he calls it.

My concern is that we are going to be looking at more and more nuclear facilities across this country, especially in Alberta, where we can use that energy to melt the tar to make the bitumen that we are going to ship, unfortunately, straight to the U.S. We are building new pipelines and this is going to further increase our greenhouse gas emissions coming from the tar sands.

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The government sees nuclear as a way to get us out of these emissions because it sees it as clean energy. However, there are a lot of problems with nuclear. It is extremely expensive. It always has cost overruns and it can be seen as dangerous.

Notwithstanding the fact that we have nuclear facilities in this country that are aging, there are more and more problems with them, and some of the licences are running out. I think we are going to see in the very near future the possibility that we could be using this nuclear liability act more and more. I wonder if my hon. colleague could comment on any of those things.

Mr. Alex Atamanenko: Mr. Speaker, I basically agree with what the member says. We have to be very careful as we move into the future. We have a chance in this country to become world leaders in the whole area of environmental technology. We must be careful how we proceed and we must make some very hard and fast choices.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I notice my colleagues from the Conservative Party are taking it personal when we talk about megaprojects. I have never met someone who would be personally slighted about something like the Athabasca tar sands, but perhaps they are.

I wonder again if the member has a sense that this is again a government that will do anything to protect the mega energy boondoggles and yet, it would not cry a tear for the hundreds of thousands of workers who have been laid off in Ontario and Quebec during this manufacturing crisis. Does he see this strange duplicity that will bend over backwards and cry tears for the Athabasca tar sands and yet say nothing about the hundreds of thousands of jobs, particularly in southern Ontario in the auto belt, where our Conservative members have run and hid under their Prime Minister's desk rather than meet workers who have been laid off in Oshawa, the London area, and Windsor?

These are very serious issues. We are talking about the complete extinction of an entire industry in Ontario and yet, we see Conservative members who will not even go and meet their constituents who are seeing the complete loss of, say, the GM plant in Oshawa. At Ford, I met with the CAW workers in London. They said that the Conservatives are completely missing in action.

Does the hon. member have any thoughts on why this strange duplicity?

• (1550)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Andrew Scheer): I am not sure if that has anything to do with Bill C-5. There was a point of order raised previously about relevance, so I will give the floor to the hon. member for British Columbia Southern Interior to respond, keeping in mind the rules of relevance regarding the third reading stage of the bill.

Mr. Alex Atamanenko: Mr. Speaker, obviously, I must respond to a question. I think it is up to those who are asking the question to realize whether or not it is relevant.

The comments are very well taken. This is not an isolated incident we are viewing with one aspect of industry. We are looking at the global picture.

What we see, to answer my colleague's question, is the lack of political will to really provide a strong direction in this country. We

see basically a strategy that involves sitting back and letting the market rule.

This is the same strategy we are seeing in my province of British Columbia and unfortunately across this country. That same strategy is being seen in the battle between the corporate sector, which is driving the agenda, and the idea that we actually have people elected who can work on behalf of all of us here in Canada.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am very proud to rise to speak today on behalf of the New Democratic Party on the issue of Bill C-5 and—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Andrew Scheer): Order. I do apologize. I forget to mention, before I recognized the hon. member for Timmins—James Bay, that the first five hours of debate have expired. We are now at the portion of debate where the allotted time for speaking is ten minutes, with a five minute question and comment period.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Speaker, I am sorry to hear that I have only 10 minutes. I was led to believe that I was going to speak for 20 minutes. I do not know if I can raise all the issues that I really wanted to raise in 10 minutes, but I will do my best. If we allow each other just a little leeway, we can probably get through this in a very healthy fashion.

It is very important to talk about this issue of liability. I have some background on the issue of liability in terms of megaprojects. I will speak to that in a moment.

The issue here is that we have to address the problem we are dealing with, which is of course whether we need to move toward a much larger nuclear strategy, along with the mega tar sands development. It is the problem of how to address energy. Once we start to address a megaproject, we of course have to deal with the liability. We have to look at what is driving this.

We get this strange schizophrenic response from the government party all the time. It tells us that we always oppose things that it brings forward. We normally do, because it seems to be a party, as G.K. Chesterton said, that is completely blinded by “the horrible mysticism of money” and pays no attention to community or the values of a balanced approach.

The government accuses us of opposing, but when we propose alternatives, it says we are speaking about things that are irrelevant. We are somehow boxed in. If we try to actually propose things and engage the government members in a dialogue, they often get upset and leave, or they try to raise points of order. So I will stay very focused.

Of course, as we know, the issue of liability with the nuclear industry is that the present liability is woefully inadequate. This is probably the one point that we will agree on with the government. We have a real problem with low liability in this country.

Where we begin to diverge almost immediately is that if the government is going to move toward the privatization of nukes, we know it needs to have some very large industrial partners that will step into the breach and assume this mercantile approach to nuclear energy.

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The problem being faced is that there is a very low liability, so what the government does is peg a new standard for liability. What is that standard? It is the minimum norm of the international average, which is \$650 million. If we agree with this new norm, we suddenly would be in a position whereby U.S. investors would now start to take interest in privatized Canadian nukes, whereas before they would not because of their own liability problems and their inability to protect victims from lawsuits.

We have already begun to diverge from the Conservative track. The Conservatives are obviously interested in privatizing nukes. They are obviously interested in opening that door as quickly as possible. They need to be seen raising the liability issue just so they can actually get credibility with investors.

Yet from the democratic point of view, we are looking at how we ensure that a development is sustainable and how we ensure that development actually protects the interests of Canadian communities, Canadian individuals and the Canadian environment.

We look at the \$650 million liability and the record of industrial nuclear accidents across the world and we recognize that \$650 million is a pittance if something goes wrong. We look to other jurisdictions that actually have set serious standards for liability. In Germany, there is unlimited liability. In Japan, there is unlimited liability. The U.S. has a limit of \$9.7 billion. That is a heck of a lot more than the \$650 million being offered by our government.

Once again we see the government diving to the basement in terms of standards that would protect communities and then telling the investors not to worry. Do not worry, says the government to them, if something goes wrong, if someone pours a coke down the front of the machine and the whole thing goes ballistic, guess who will be on the hook for it? It will not be the plant, the investors or the corporation. It will be the Canadian public who will pick up the tab.

Of course that is a win-win if one lives in the world that these gentlemen—and some women—live in, which is the world of being there to privatize and support the complete interests of the big energy interests, whether it is the Athabasca tar sands or the nukes.

We are looking at pathetic minimal standards. We are also seeing that this is a very lax and very loosey-goosey bill. It would allow the government and the industry to get through the approvals process like a groupie with a backstage pass.

•(1555)

The New Democrats tried to bring forward a few clear amendments that would actually begin to address this imbalance. We brought forward 35 amendments to try to bring about balance. That is our job as opposition members. It is not our job to be toadies to the Conservative Party. Our job is to bring balance to a very unbalanced government approach, so we brought forward 35 amendments.

We wanted to work with the government and say that if there are going to be nukes, let us look at liability and let us look at how we can ensure that the public is protected. Of course the Conservatives were not interested in balance. They were looking at opening the door to the massive expansion of the nukes.

Of course, as has been suggested here and by many people in the media, this is an agenda that is really driven by the fact that whatever the Athabasca tar sands development needs, the Athabasca tar sands development will get. Therefore, we have a government that will suddenly bring in a bill on limiting the liability of the nukes so they can be privatized and we can move forward in that direction.

This is the problem we are dealing with: an unbalanced approach by the government. What is driving it, of course, is the fact that the Conservative Party has presented itself to the Canadian public as a front for big energy projects at any costs, without any scrutiny, for whatever there needs to be, whether it wants to dump the waste in a lake or approve massive expansions of projects that increase massive amounts of greenhouse gas without proper scrutiny.

Then, of course, we are expected to sign off on nuclear liability that does not have any of the real clear provisions that will protect the public.

We have the problem and we have what is driving it, but the real issue, as I have said, is that if we are going to oppose, we have to propose. The issue the New Democrats are very concerned about is the billions and billions of dollars that are spent on nukes. We consistently have seen massive overruns time and time again.

There has never been a nuclear project that has come in at even close to costs. Billions have been spent in Ontario, and now billions are going to be spent in Ontario under Dalton McGuinty's government, and that money would actually be better spent in limiting the energy environmental footprint from one massive project to many smaller projects.

My colleague had begun to speak about this earlier. He spoke about the need for retrofitting and for looking at alternatives. In the region I live in, we have mine shafts in the centre of town that go down 8,000 feet. This is a perfect climate. Any community that has had coal mining or hardrock mining is a perfect climate for creating geothermal energy. Geothermal is sustainable. It does not rely on the nuclear industry. This is the proposition that we are trying to raise and it is perfectly in line with this.

However, I want to get back to the issue of liability because it is very important. We had a megaproject boondoggle in the Abitibi-Temiskaming region in Ontario. It was the Adams Mine dump. It was created as this wonderful gift for investors, whereby the largest dump in North America would be created using an abandoned iron ore mine on the heights of land above the farm belt of Temiskaming. Millions of tonnes of garbage would be dumped in there even though 350 million litres of groundwater flowed through every year and the risk of contamination was over a 2,000 year lifespan.

However, the reason this crazy crackpot scheme was allowed to get to first base was of course that it was under the government of Mike Harris. Many of his cronies are here now in the House. The other thing was that the government limited the environmental assessment. It refused to let the public have full disclosure, but two things eventually killed the project.

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One was massive public protest by farmers, forestry workers and first nations people. I am very glad to say that I was one of those people involved in that, but when it came to city council, written in the very fine print of the contract, which was not supposed to be made public, was the issue of liability. Who was on the hook if something went wrong?

It was actually the New Democratic members of the Toronto city council who stood up and said, "Wait a minute". They said it was the consumer who would be on the hook, the taxpayer. Then that whole chimera, the whole deck of cards, came tumbling down, and the mega boondoggle fell apart. Once the members of the public knew that they and the City of Toronto were on the hook for the unlimited liability if something went wrong, nobody wanted to touch it, and not an investor in North America or the world would pick up the project.

The issue of who is on the hook for the liability is always crucial. If we actually went to the kinds of liability provisions that are needed with any nuclear project, not one private investor in the world would be loony enough to get involved in such a project.

● (1600)

The NDP remains absolutely opposed to this bill. We remain absolutely appalled that the government is not interested in dealing with the amendments necessary to protect the public interest. We remain very vigilant against attempts by the government to fast track any privatization of the nuclear industry that limits liability.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille (Beauharnois—Salaberry, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I listened closely to the presentation of the hon. member opposite.

I was on the Standing Committee on Natural Resources and I studied Bill C-5 with the rest of the hon. members.

The Bloc Québécois certainly shares some of the concerns of the hon. member opposite with respect to the \$650 million compensation amount. This was cause for much debate in committee. Unfortunately, none of the witnesses who were asked to appear before us swayed us or even suggested an alternative, perhaps because data on that amount was not available at the time. Neither the Bloc, the Liberal Party, nor the NDP asked the witnesses specifically to address the \$650 million compensation amount. The only thing the witnesses said was that, unfortunately, it was not currently possible to insure and reinsure the compensation in the event of an incident.

I would like to know what my colleague has to say about that. Since we did not have the opportunity to hear from witnesses and to debate this here in this House or in committee, can he share his sources with us? What witnesses, in his view, could have come to testify and contribute to our debates?

[*English*]

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Speaker, I was sorry that in my speech I did actually focus a fair bit on the Conservative Party and not on the Bloc Québécois. I did not want to show any disrespect for the Bloc in not mentioning it as part of mega boondoggle energy projects. I have been on the James Bay coast in Quebec and I have seen the

massive flooding and the mercury contamination that has been done by the Bloc's love of mega environment and energy projects.

I am surprised that the member, who is on the committee, says that she does not remember any testimony. I was looking at the testimony of Professor Michel Duguay from Quebec's Laval University in Quebec City. He said that he thought the \$650 million was a drop in the bucket compared to the amount of money that would be needed in case of an accident.

I was thinking of Mr. Edwards who spoke. He said that he felt "it is important for elected representatives to ensure that the nuclear industry is held publicly accountable and to ensure that the best interests of Canadians are not compromised in order to serve the interest of the nuclear industry".

We believe that the figure of \$650 million has no sound scientific or financial basis and that this arbitrary amount serves to distract the committee from the much more important question. I do not know, but perhaps my hon. colleague was distracted.

● (1605)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP): Mr. Speaker, if we look at the past and all the comments made by the members from the Bloc Québécois in committee, it is very clear that they felt that the level of civil liability could not be limited to \$650 million. Indeed, speech after speech, the members from the Bloc Québécois were very clear on this. Like the NDP, they felt this limited amount of civil liability was clearly insufficient. I can cite member after member, including several who are here in this House today.

I would like to ask the hon. member for Timmins—James Bay whether he knows where this about-face is coming from in the Bloc Québécois on an issue that affects Quebeckers. They are the ones who will have to pay if there is ever a nuclear accident.

[*English*]

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague asks a very in depth question. I was actually thinking about that after I sat down. I thought that perhaps I had finished my comments too early, but I sometimes think it is very important to be brief, direct and to the point in the House. I did feel that things certainly were being left out of the little exchange that I had with my hon. colleague from the Bloc Québécois.

Certainly there were serious concerns raised about the limits on liability, because the Canadian taxpayer will be on the hook. If something goes wrong, the municipalities and provincial governments will be faced with the costs. Talk about the ultimate intervention in the affairs of Quebec: we would be talking about a nuclear accident and the citizens of Quebec being left on the hook. So why the Bloc Québécois would not stand up—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Andrew Scheer): We will move on.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Beauharnois—Salaberry.

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[*Translation*]

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille (Beauharnois—Salaberry, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is truly a pleasure for me to speak to this bill at third reading and to answer the NDP's many questions about the Bloc Québécois' position.

We have been talking about this bill since October 2007. This bill would overhaul an outdated act that both Conservative and Liberal governments have cast aside. Under the old act, maximum liability for damages was \$75 million. Many of our debates have hinged on the amount of compensation. Those on the other side of the House have not really talked about the mechanism, the tribunal, provided for in this new legislation to support citizens and communities seeking compensation.

Bill C-5 seeks to modernize the old act. The amount of liability has not changed in some 30 years. The NDP's position is irresponsible because if a serious nuclear incident were to happen right now in Ontario or another province, even Quebec, compensation would not exceed \$75 million. Delaying the passage of this bill is irresponsible because the status quo is not acceptable.

I understand and agree with many members of this House that \$650 million is not nearly enough. The interesting thing about this bill is that it includes mechanisms allowing the minister to change that amount as often as every five years. That does not mean the amount will be changed every five years; that just means that it can be.

The fact that the NDP has done everything in its power to delay passage of this bill means that today or even yesterday, had there been an incident, people and communities would have received just \$75 million in compensation instead of \$650 million. Even though we disagree on certain points, and even though we often disagree with the critic during Standing Committee on Natural Resources meetings, we have good discussions, and we often end up reaching an agreement.

When Bill C-5 was being debated in committee, we heard from many witnesses. A fairly rigorous examination was conducted. This is a somewhat technical bill dealing with insurance. Within the committee, there were no members with expertise acquired in the insurance industry prior to being elected. Accordingly, we listened very carefully to the witnesses as well as to the House and departmental legislative staff who advised us very well. We asked them many questions and I think we did a good job. Of course, the Bloc Québécois cannot say that it agrees with the bill 100%, but we do believe that, basically, it represents an improvement. The status quo was unacceptable. We think this is an improvement and that this bill is better than the previous legislation.

We do share some concerns of the members opposite who were wondering why the Conservative government suddenly woke up and decided to modernize an old act that had been abandoned by previous Liberal and Conservative governments. Why are they suddenly waking up and exerting pressure to see this bill passed quickly? Of course, the Conservative government endorses nuclear energy and is looking into opportunities in that area. Canada's legislation was completely outdated and no longer met international standards and accepted norms.

In that respect, I completely understand the distress and concerns, since I share them as well. The fact remains that, after all the evidence, all the work done in committee and after debating the amendments proposed by the Bloc Québécois and the NDP, unfortunately, very few amendments were retained. If the Blocs' amendments had also been accepted, the bill would have been even better.

In any case, we believe that the creation of a tribunal to hear cases and ensure compensation for communities and citizens is already a step in the right direction.

● (1610)

We heard some rather touching testimony. All municipalities with a nuclear power station located in their limits are members of an association and the mayor of a "host" city spoke to us about her concerns.

Her message was that she does not oppose the bill because she believes that this old, outdated law—cast aside by the Liberals and the Conservatives—should be revised. However, she was particularly concerned that \$650 million would not be enough to compensate both individuals and the communities. For example, she stated that all infrastructure could be affected, requiring much more than \$650 million in compensation.

Yet, the mayor also said that \$650 million was better than the \$75 million currently in place. The testimony to this effect by several witnesses determined the position we took in the committee.

It is rather odd. We studied a large number of amendments in committee, which were presented in the proper way and democratically. Then, all of a sudden, without consultation or democratic debate by our committee, a series of NDP amendments were presented in this House and, unfortunately, the committee was unable to hear witnesses in order to further study them.

I am a new member and this is the first time I have had such an experience. In committee, we carefully studied a bill and the amendments; then at subsequent readings in the House, we were faced with fifteen to twenty amendments. Some had been studied in committee and reintroduced, but others were altogether new. I know it takes a lot of work to introduce amendments, and I found it unfortunate that we were unable to study them in committee with new witnesses.

The Bloc Québécois is very concerned by the renewed interest in nuclear energy and, above all, by all the energy this Conservative government is putting into promoting it. I often laugh under my breath. In fact, I find it amusing that the Minister of Natural Resources justifies promoting nuclear energy by stating that it is a clean energy because it reduces greenhouse gas emissions. At the same time, he says that every province is responsible for choosing its own energy and that if the provinces choose nuclear energy, that is their business.

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I am saying to him that safety and waste management are federal responsibilities, and thousands of dollars are currently being spent for nothing. There are the MAPLE reactors. Half a billion dollars was invested to design a replacement reactor for the old Chalk River reactor. But this design, unfortunately, will never be built because Atomic Energy of Canada decided to scrap the project due to a major design flaw that could not be fixed. The world's top experts are not able to find a solution to the MAPLE design flaw.

It is true that energy comes under provincial jurisdiction. However, the federal government is responsible for waste management and technology development. Unfortunately, we are facing a government that spends Quebec and Canadian taxpayers' money on projects that result in money pits.

Ultimately, we wonder who will benefit from these projects, which really should be condemned. That is what the Bloc Québécois is doing. We are telling the Conservative government that it is on the wrong track, promoting energy that will produce fewer greenhouse gas emissions in the short term, but will create problems further down the road. We have a problem right now, but we are putting off fixing it until later, which creates serious consequences in terms of waste management.

• (1615)

[*English*]

Ms. Catherine Bell (Vancouver Island North, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to the speech by my hon. colleague from Beauharnois—Salaberry and I take exception to several things she said but one in particular. It is not irresponsible to put forward amendments to try to make a bill better.

I will not apologize for putting forward amendments. It may take a bit of time but it is our due diligence, which is something we must do in the House. It is our job as members of Parliament, as people who represent our communities and our country, to make the best of a bill.

Yes, the NDP put forward amendments. She mentioned that we did not put forward any at committee but that is absolutely wrong. The NDP introduced 30 amendments in committee but, unfortunately, they were not supported. These amendments would have made the bill better and stronger.

My colleague from Western Arctic introduced those same amendments in the House at report stage. They were ruled in order by the Speaker and we debated them. We were hoping the broader House might take an interest in them because, unfortunately, in committee the Bloc, the Liberals and the Conservatives did not.

The other thing my colleague said was that if there were an incident or accident at this moment, Canadians would not be on the hook. AECL is owned by the Government of Canada and if there were to be any kind of situation, especially involving the NRU reactor at Chalk River, Canadians would be on the hook for that.

I want to ask my colleague if she understands any of what I said.

• (1620)

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille: Mr. Speaker, sometimes when we say things in this House—and I am not criticizing the interpreters—

we speak quickly and it can be very difficult to interpret our comments properly. If I may, I would like to make a few corrections.

I never said that the NDP never proposed amendments in committee. I said that it did propose amendments in committee and that a series of other amendments had been proposed at report stage. I found it too bad that those that were proposed at report stage had not been presented in committee for debate so that we could call new witnesses to look into the new amendments further. When making accusations, one has to be sure to have understood what the other said. That is the first clarification I want to make.

I would like to make a second clarification. I never said that people would not be entitled to compensation. I said—and I will say it again slowly—that, currently, in the event of a nuclear incident causing harm to people or communities, the amount of compensation would be \$75 million, which is considered insufficient. In that sense, the status quo is not acceptable.

[*English*]

Ms. Catherine Bell (Vancouver Island North, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I only have 10 minutes on debate, but I could speak for 20 or 30 minutes on this subject.

As I mentioned in some of my questions to my colleagues, this bill was put forward by the government to amend the Nuclear Liability Act. Unfortunately the bill as put forward was not acceptable to the NDP. We felt it needed to be amended quite substantially, so we proposed many amendments at committee. Unfortunately, they were not supported by my colleagues at committee.

We are quite concerned because we feel the bill is being put forward in this fashion in an effort to aid the government to use nuclear energy in this country basically as a carbon offset. This is the biggest offset plan that anybody could have imagined.

Unfortunately, seeing nuclear energy as a clean source of energy is also misguided. The production of nuclear energy causes waste and that waste has to be dealt with. We have never been able to find an acceptable solution for dealing with the waste. It is still there. It will last for millions of years. It is highly toxic and dangerous. At any point in time an incident could result.

With all these things in mind, we felt it was incumbent upon us at committee and in the House to put forward our recommendations and amendments to try to make the bill better so that we could support it.

We also agree that as it stands now, nuclear liability in this country is far too low at \$75 million. That is not nearly enough to cover any kind of disaster in any community. It needs to be increased, but to increase it to the minimum international standard is also not the right way to go. That is why we put forward amendments to increase it to an unlimited liability on the part of the nuclear operator. We feel very strongly that Canadians, including Quebecers, should not be put on the hook by having their tax dollars used to pay the potential billions of dollars that would be needed to cover the cost of a nuclear incident in this country.

We do have some facilities near our borders. If a nuclear incident were to occur near our borders, what would be the impact from other countries? What would we be on the hook for there?

This is a serious issue and we take it very seriously. We are not here to try to hold up the bill just to play games. We are very concerned about this issue. We want to make the bill better and something we could support.

Right now there is an issue with AECL, the company that operates under the government. The taxpayers basically own this company. If there were to be an accident or an incident, the taxpayers would be on the hook for that company. We would never want to see that.

Earlier today my colleague from Winnipeg referenced a book, *Nuclear Power Is Not the Answer*, by Helen Caldicott. I found some interesting passages in this book, which I want to share with the House and with Canadians. It talks about accidental, and unfortunately, terrorist induced nuclear meltdowns, and says:

Nuclear power plants are vulnerable to many events that could lead to meltdowns, including human and mechanical errors; impacts from climate change, global warming, and earthquakes; and, we now know, terrorist attacks.

•(1625)

I would like to read a couple of excerpts to give people a sense of what could happen and why it is important that we have unlimited liability on our facilities so that Canadian taxpayers are not on the hook.

We know also that in this country the reactors are aging. The NRU reactor at Chalk River is around 50 years old. The Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission is looking at having to allow that unit to operate longer. It is only supposed to operate until 2011 but we are looking now to 2016. It is going to continue to operate because there is no replacement for that.

The aging nuclear facilities in this country will have more and more problems as time goes by. Metal fatigue, rust and all kinds of things can happen as things age. We have to ensure that we have the safety and protection of Canadian people in mind when we are talking about nuclear liability.

In her book, *Nuclear Power Is Not the Answer*, which is an American publication, Dr. Caldicott says that even though today's reactors were designed for a 40 year life span, the NRC, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, acceding to industry pressure, is currently approving 20 year extensions to the original 40 year licences for nuclear power plants.

That is a concern. Although that refers to the U.S., the same kinds of things are happening in Canada. I am concerned about these aging

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facilities, that we do not have replacement power. They do not have to be nuclear facilities. They could be cleaner energy alternatives such as solar and wind. We could look at doing an east-west grid across this country.

We could have alternatives to nuclear power. We would not have to worry about pressure being put on our Nuclear Safety Commission to prolong the licences for these facilities if we had alternatives to that energy source. It is quite a concern. If the aging facilities called on the Nuclear Safety Commission to extend their licences for longer periods, we would have to start worrying about the near misses that might happen in continuing the use of those aging facilities.

Another thing that Dr. Caldicott talks about is global warming. Who would have thought that global warming would have impacted nuclear facilities. She says in her book that there are many facilities that are built on coastlines which could possibly be impacted by tsunamis or earthquakes in places around the world such as India. They could be impacted by global warming.

She talks about terrorist attacks, which we are quite concerned about as well. According to this book, the necessary steps have not been taken to increase security around nuclear facilities in case of a terrorist attack. We have seen increased security measures at airports and other border security measures, but we have not had an increase in security around nuclear facilities.

We need to make sure that the steps are in place to protect Canadians in the event of a nuclear accident. We must make sure that the liability on the part of the operator is a lot higher than \$650 million, because we know that if there were an accident, the liability costs would be in the billions of dollars.

•(1630)

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille (Beauharnois—Salaberry, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I listened very carefully to my colleague across the way. We share many of the same concerns about the safety of citizens and communities in terms of nuclear energy.

We have grown increasingly worried since the Conservative government interfered politically with the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission by firing its president, Ms. Keen, last year. That action shattered the trust of Quebecers and Canadians. And since our nuclear reactors are getting older, trust in the commission is waning.

My colleague works with me on the Standing Committee on Natural Resources. I would like to ask her if, in light of the testimony we have heard during our current study of the MAPLE and Chalk River reactors, she is reassured when it comes to nuclear safety.

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[English]

Ms. Catherine Bell: Mr. Speaker, that is a very good question. I know that the member is very concerned about nuclear safety as because that came up in the discussions at committee and she put forward questions in a very forthright manner. I have to congratulate her on her interventions there.

Yes, it is an issue of trust for many Canadians and something that was shaken very severely back in November when we had the incident at the NRU reactor in Chalk River. Canadians are very concerned.

I have received many calls and many letters from my constituents and we do not even have nuclear facilities in our area, but they are worried about what might happen across this country.

This is an issue of national trust and we must do everything we can to ensure that Canadians are protected in every way.

• (1635)

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I was very interested in the points my hon. colleague raised about these aging facilities and the real serious questions about safety.

I want to be very careful. As someone who is closer to 50 than 30 now, I am a little more sensitive to the issue of age. However, I would not drive a Studebaker. I would not use a reel-to-reel tape recorder. I would not use an IBM adding machine. I would not wear a ducktail or have my wife go around in a poodle skirt.

Now I know that members in the Conservative Party probably figure Canada peaked mid-1950s and it has been downhill ever since, but I certainly also would not want the safety of our country to be dependent on facilities that were not meant to last past 50 years, facilities with incredible risks of liability.

Given the fact that the Conservative government, which again probably still is in the black and white world, fired the head of the regulatory safety commission that is looking over these aging energy behemoths, I would like to ask my hon. colleague if she has any concerns about the state of our present facilities.

Ms. Catherine Bell: Mr. Speaker, this is another good question from my colleague. I go back to what my colleague from the Bloc also asked. The nuclear safety commissioner was basically fired in the dead of night for doing her job of protecting Canadians. This has again shaken the trust of Canadians.

We know that the NRU unit is 50 years old. It is starting to deteriorate. Increased safety measures are having to be put in place and yet, there is nothing coming forward for the replacement of this facility which makes, primarily, medical isotopes. Unfortunately, this is something that we have to get our heads around.

[Translation]

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 Kitchener Centre, Elections Canada; the hon. member for Davenport, Cluster Bombs.

Mr. Mario Laframboise (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise and speak to Bill C-5, An

Act respecting civil liability and compensation for damage in case of a nuclear incident.

I am especially pleased to be speaking right after our critic, the member for Beauharnois—Salaberry, who does an excellent job and very capably represents the Bloc on the Standing Committee on Natural Resources. A specialist in community services, she always defended peoples' interests when she was in business or working in the community. She always paid special attention to the men and women around her. That is why she is capable of defending her constituents every day, and that is why our colleague from Beauharnois—Salaberry sits on the Standing Committee on Natural Resources.

I am not an expert. I have some things to say. I listened to her speech and learned from it. However, I do understand the political game the NDP is playing. It will always astound me, because the NDP has never been in power in this country—

Mr. Peter Julian: In five provinces and one territory—

Mr. Mario Laframboise: We will not talk about the disasters in the provinces or the NDP disasters in Ontario. This member makes me laugh when he says that the NDP has been in power in five Canadian provinces. In any event, it has never been in power federally. We have an advantage over the NDP in that we know we will never be in power, whereas the NDP is doing everything it can to come to power.

The NDP will never come to power for the simple reason that the New Democrats do not get it. That is the tragedy of the New Democratic Party: it does not understand. It does not understand that the Conservative Party introduced this bill on compensation because it wants to develop nuclear energy.

We know that, in Quebec, nuclear energy will not solve all our problems. Those days are gone. We have plants in Gentilly, but those days are gone. We have moved on to hydroelectricity. We in Quebec do know, though, that we are going to have to pay 22% of the bill when there is damage. That is a fact.

Every day in committee, the member for Beauharnois—Salaberry defends the interests of Quebecers, as I do every day, and as all our Bloc colleagues do. Our objective is to defend our fellow citizens. We are Quebecers.

This bill has one benefit: everyone agrees that the \$75 million for compensation is out of date. It is true that we would have liked to improve on the \$650 million.

We would have liked to have supported the NDP, except its problem is that it did not understand that the Conservatives and the Liberals were together and had decided that \$650 million was enough. What the NDP is doing is just delaying the implementation of this bill. In the meantime, if there were an accident, there would be no bill to guarantee the \$650 million in compensation.

Government Orders

As the member for Beauharnois—Salaberry said, at least the bill states that it will be reviewed every five years. If the minister ever finds that the compensation is insufficient, he will be able to increase the amount. Once again, it is a matter of understanding the dynamics of politics.

Earlier, the NDP critics said that they are not playing politics. When the Liberals say white, all they do is say black. It is always the same. Since I came here in 2000, it has always been the same. In their approach to politics they are cut from the same cloth as the Liberals. They look at what the Liberals are going to do and then decide to do the opposite.

That amazes me, especially when we are talking about issues as important as compensation for damage in case of a nuclear accident. It does not need to be spelled out. We know that reactors, not just in Canada, but throughout the world, are not in good shape. We know that these nuclear reactors are dangerous.

So it is important to be able to counter that. Obviously the Conservatives want to develop this energy system. It is really something to hear the Minister of Natural Resources claim that it is a clean energy, yet no one knows what to do with the nuclear waste.

Furthermore, the tragedy for Quebecers is that the government wants to bury the nuclear waste in the Canadian Shield in Quebec. We are not the ones producing the waste, and we are the ones getting stuck with it.

Every day in this House, the Bloc Québécois will fight tooth and nail to keep nuclear waste that has been produced in other provinces from being buried in Quebec. Imagine. Other members in this House need to realize this.

In Quebec, we decided to develop hydroelectricity without a penny from the federal government. I hope that no one faints: we did not get one penny from the federal government.

● (1640)

Quebeckers alone paid for the development of hydroelectricity, through their taxes and their hydro bills, which they pay to Hydro-Québec, a crown corporation. The federal government has never contributed a cent, yet Quebec has always paid 22% to 25% of the costs of nuclear energy based on its contribution and its population compared to that of Canada. Quebec has always footed approximately a quarter of the total bill for development of nuclear energy, non-renewable energies and fossil fuels, the oil sector and all of the investments made. That is a fact.

So there is no reason to be surprised if the Bloc Québécois members rise in this House to defend the only solution we see—quite simply, Quebec's separation—so that we can manage our own energy development. Quebec is the province most likely to respect the Kyoto protocol because we developed our hydroelectric system with our own money.

We are doing the same thing with wind energy. Admittedly, the federal government is somewhat involved, but not anywhere in the range of the \$900 billion invested in fossil fuel development.

I would point out that tax credits for petroleum development still exist, but there is no such development in Quebec. Furthermore, not

a single litre of oil produced in western Canada goes to Quebec, because of the Borden line. People listening to us all think that Canada is an oil producing country and that we pay our share, but not a single litre of that oil makes it to Quebec, thanks to the famous Borden line, which comes from the west and stops at Borden. The rest goes to the United States. We, on the other hand, have to get our supply from other countries. It arrives by tanker along the St. Lawrence. We buy it from overseas. That is the reality.

If Quebec were its own country, it could have energy self-sufficiency. It would be very easy, simply because we produce our own hydroelectricity and receive our oil from other countries. We buy it internationally, so we do not need Canada. People must accept that reality.

We worked very hard in committee, especially the hon. member for Beauharnois—Salaberry, to try to improve this bill as much as possible, in order to force companies in nuclear development to be responsible in the future, and have them pay compensation and pay out large sums in the event of a nuclear disaster. We are talking about \$650 million. We chose the maximum amount possible, while remaining very realistic.

The Conservatives and the Liberals were in bed together and therefore had the majority. Considering the Conservatives' hunger to develop this sector, we simply want to pass a bill very quickly to increase fines and compensation in the event of a nuclear incident or disaster. That must be clear. Otherwise, the Conservatives will sell the development of this sector to the Americans, as they have done with so many Canadian businesses. They like to let things take their course. Clearly, that allows foreigners to come and make their profits at our expense and, especially, in the event of an incident, at the expense of certain people who could not be reimbursed for all damages.

Once again, we are supporting certain bills but we are not happy about it. We had hoped the NDP amendments would be adopted and we supported them. However, reality caught up with us. The Conservatives and the Liberals are in league on this one. They have chosen to go full steam ahead in that direction. Unduly delaying Bill C-5, as the NDP is doing, will prevent passage of a bill that could be of great benefit in the event of a nuclear disaster.

We saw what happened after the nuclear disasters at Chernobyl in Ukraine and Three Mile Island in the United States. No one wants disasters to happen but they do. The only way to avoid them is to stop building nuclear power plants or to devote them to producing other types of energy. However, there are none. The Conservatives have no imagination when it comes to energy. The Conservatives' priorities are oil, nuclear power and the military. They do nothing for seniors, the forestry and manufacturing sectors or the general public and everything for all-out development.

Once again we will vote in favour of the bill even though we know it could have been better. It is nonetheless better than what we have.

Government Orders

• (1645)

[English]

Ms. Catherine Bell (Vancouver Island North, NDP): Mr. Speaker, if there were a nuclear facility in Montreal and there were an accident at that facility, how much does my colleague think Montreal would be worth? Would it be worth \$650 million or would it be more? I just want to get an idea as to whether he thinks \$650 million would be enough liability or if he thinks it should be more in the case of a nuclear incident.

[Translation]

Mr. Mario Laframboise: Mr. Speaker, my colleague can rest easy: no nuclear plants will be built near Montreal. She can be sure of that because we have hydroelectric power. However, should \$650 million ever have to be paid out, it would probably not be enough; it will never be enough. Of course I agree with them on that.

Nevertheless, we have to face political reality and understand that the Conservatives and the Liberals have decided that \$650 million is enough. We can try to block it or stop it, but in the meantime, the \$75 million figure applies. That is the NDP's position: if an incident were to occur tomorrow, the \$75 million maximum would apply. That is what it is focusing on.

If we were to listen to the New Democrats and do as they suggest, the maximum liability would remain at that level for a long time because they are delaying the passage of the bill, thus limiting compensation to \$75 million. That is probably what they are hoping. I have never understood their political strategy, and I still do not understand it today.

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille (Beauharnois—Salaberry, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate my colleague on his excellent speech. Because he is an infrastructure specialist, because of his responsibilities within the Bloc Québécois, and because he has been a mayor and president of the Union des municipalités du Québec, my question will be very precise.

Earlier, our New Democratic colleagues recommended solar and geothermal energy as alternatives to nuclear energy, and we agree with that. They recommended an east-west power grid. The Bloc Québécois does not agree with that solution. We agree with the idea of a grid, but as to who will pay for it, that is another matter.

I would like my colleague to comment on that issue and the debate over an east-west power grid.

• (1650)

Mr. Mario Laframboise: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from Beauharnois—Salaberry for working every day in the interest of Quebeckers.

Again, given that Quebec paid for its own hydroelectric network without any federal contribution, given that we buy our gas and oil ourselves internationally, which is delivered by ships on the St. Lawrence River, I hope that my colleagues in this House will understand that Quebec is going to sell its electricity to the highest bidder.

It is obviously not our role to support the development of this grid and it is certainly not our role to pay a cent for one-quarter of

developing it, because Canada has never paid for the development of Quebec's hydroelectric grid.

I hope hon. members will be understanding and respectful enough of Quebeckers not to make them pay 25% of the bill to develop grids for the others and that they will understand that we are going to sell our electricity for the best market price to those who will give us the most money. If it is the Americans, then it will be the Americans. If it is Ontario, then it will be Ontario. If it is the other provinces, then it will be the other provinces. We are here to do business, the way they have always done business with Quebec. They have always exploited us to the maximum. That is the reality.

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would just like to make a comment in response to the statements by the member for Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel. It is interesting to note that he spent his entire 10 minutes talking about the NDP. That is likely because of the big nominations we have seen recently, such as the one in Outremont or the one yesterday in Gatineau. Three hundred people came out for the NDP nomination in this riding represented by the Bloc Québécois. Obviously the Bloc feels it is important to try to attack the NDP, because it can see that more and more Quebeckers are turning towards the NDP.

Why? It is very clear. The Bloc's position on Bill C-5 is incomprehensible. We know what the Conservatives are doing, and I will come back to that in a moment. We know that the Liberals go along with anything the Conservative Party says. As for the Bloc Québécois, after supporting the Conservative Party on all those budgets and confidence votes, this is the third time it has given up when faced with something that is not in the best interests of Quebeckers.

In the case of Bill C-5, it is clear that civil liability will fall on Quebeckers for any amount over \$650 million if there is an incident. That is what happened with Gently-2, just east of Montreal. Once this is privatized, Quebec taxpayers will have to pay. Based on the costs of other nuclear incidents, that could mean paying \$499 for every dollar paid within the liability limit. That is ridiculous.

I wanted to make these comments before moving on. I do not understand the Bloc's position, but it is very clear that this is not in the best interests of Quebeckers.

[English]

I would like to come back to this issue of Bill C-5 which should be known as the worst nuclear practices act put forward by the government in an attempt, in the long term, to essentially privatize Canadian nuclear facilities.

We know that the current status of nuclear facilities makes it impossible for American private companies to take over Canadian nuclear facilities because there is liability legislation in American law that when foreign liability insurance is too low those nuclear companies are responsible for picking up the liability in the event of a nuclear accident.

Government Orders

What have the Conservatives done? Their privatization agenda seems to be as broad and vast as possible. They have privatized airline transportation safety and given it over to the companies, which certainly did not work with railway safety or business aircraft and it will not work with public transport in the skies, and now nuclear liability itself. The government seems hell bent on privatizing every facet of Canadian life. We have to wonder if this is in the interest of the Canadian population.

I will come back to this term of worst nuclear practices because we need to look at what is happening around the world and how other countries are handling this same question. Hopefully, in all four corners of the House, there would be some degree of consensus that we have to move to best practices, not worst practices.

What is the issue of liability? What it means is that whatever the liability limit is in Canadian legislation, Canadian taxpayers will be picking up the tab for everything beyond that amount.

What does that mean? It means that if we privatize nuclear safety, and the government has shown its willingness and determination to privatize safety in every other aspect, we could have a private nuclear company botching its nuclear safety and causing a massive accident. It would not be the first time it has happened. We have tabled in the House dozens and dozens of nuclear accidents taking place since 1945. It is a regular occurrence.

Therefore, to say that there is a possibility of an accident, one needs only look at the facts and the reality. We cannot pretend that there will not be an accident when we have this past track record. Therefore, we need to look at the whole issue of how we handle these accidents and how we handle liability.

Other countries have said that companies need to have strong liability levels. Germany and Japan both have unlimited liability. In the United States we are talking of liability limits that are in the order of \$10 billion. What do the Conservatives propose, with the support of the Liberals and the Bloc Québécois, three-quarters of this House basically just dropping their arms in surrender and saying that whatever the Prime Minister wants he gets? They are proposing \$650 million. It is ridiculous.

We need only look at one nuclear accident and the estimated damages, the nuclear accident that took place in the Ukraine. The estimated amount in terms of overall damages by the Russian government is in the order of \$235 billion. I will repeat that because I think it is important for our hon. friends in the other three-quarters of the House to understand the difference between \$650 million and \$235 billion. What does that mean? It means that the potential consequences of shoddy management practices in nuclear facilities would cost in the order of \$235 billion and yet the government proposes to set the liability limit far below that.

In fact, in that particular case, if that had been a Canadian nuclear reactor and if that had been on Canadian soil, under the guidelines of Bill C-5 that would mean the company's liability would be \$1 and the Canadian taxpayers' liability would be \$500. For every \$1 of the company's responsibility, the taxpayers would be liable for \$500.

• (1655)

I say that is absurd and so do members of the NDP caucus who have been speaking in the House against this bill. It is absolutely

absurd that we would limit the company's responsibility to that small an amount, the minimum possible international standards. That is why we in the NDP say that Bill C-5 should be known as the worst nuclear practices act.

In the recent statistics coming out of the latest parliamentary session, and I do not think I am betraying anything unless there is a massive shift in the next 24 hours, it turns out that the average NDP MP does 19 times the work of MPs from other caucuses, particularly backbench Conservatives and Liberal MPs.

When Bill C-5 came forward, we immediately got to work offering dozens of amendments to clean up the bill so Canadian taxpayers would not be on the hook. We raised it in committee and thought we had the support of the Liberals and the Bloc. However, any time there is a bill the Prime Minister wants passed, the Liberals back off immediately and simply agree to pass it. In something reminiscent of the softwood lumber sellout, which both the Liberals and the Bloc supported the Conservatives on and on which B.C. is still suffering the enormous consequences of that sellout, the Bloc told the Prime Minister to take whatever he wanted and Bill C-5 was not amended.

We then brought forward amendment after amendment in the House and still there have been no changes, which is why we have been speaking against this bill. It is ridiculous. It is simply the worst possible nuclear practice. It is not in keeping with Canadian interests and it is irresponsible.

The reason we have been speaking out against this so-called responsible bill, the worst nuclear practices act, in the House of Commons, and raising this issue in every tribunal that we can and, by the way, getting significant public support, is because it does not make sense to push for the privatization of the nuclear industry, to lessen safeguards over the nuclear industry or to have a liability amount that is so ridiculously low that Canadian taxpayers, in the horrendous and horrific possibility of a real nuclear accident, would be on the hook for centuries.

We know that nuclear material is radioactive for centuries. This bill, the worst nuclear practices act, is a radioactive bill because it would have consequences that would last for centuries, which is why we are opposing it.

• (1700)

Ms. Catherine Bell (Vancouver Island North, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague from Burnaby—New Westminster understands what this bill means and why we tried to amend it but, sadly, could not get it amended in committee and could not get it amended in the House at report stage. We want our voices to be heard loud and clear, which is what he has done, about the problems in the bill and why it should not go forward.

Government Orders

One of the biggest issues is the amount of the liability. I want to ask a similar question to the one I asked my Bloc colleague. Does he think the government is devaluing Canadian communities that have nuclear facilities where there could be an incident? When we say that a community is only worth \$650 million and we know it is worth a lot more, does he think the government is devaluing Canadian communities by having such a low liability?

Mr. Peter Julian: Mr. Speaker, the member for Vancouver Island North represents an area that has been devalued by the Conservative government, North Vancouver Island. Through the devastating softwood lumber sellout, she has seen first-hand what she has had to do to fight on behalf of her communities.

The Conservative government basically sold out pretty well every community in British Columbia, certainly, northern communities across the prairies, northern Ontario and northern Quebec, with the softwood lumber sellout. Ten thousand jobs were lost. There was a hemorrhaging of jobs to the United States and a billion dollars were given up, which is absolutely ridiculous.

We see yet another initiative of the Conservatives as part of their great agenda to sell out Canadian communities. There is absolutely no doubt that when we limit liability to \$650 million and we know the potential in a nuclear catastrophe is in the order of hundreds of billions of dollars, when we see that other countries like Germany and Japan have unlimited liability, which forces the companies to assure proper practices in the nuclear sphere, and when we see it in its entirety, it is very clear that the Conservative government does not value Canadian communities, whether they be in Newfoundland and Labrador, or on Vancouver Island or in the north.

• (1705)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP): Mr. Speaker, based on the analysis he just gave, does my hon. colleague not agree that it would actually be better for Canada to find ways to produce electricity that are permanent, sustainable and viable, unlike atomic energy? Does he not also think that, since such a low limit is being established, there is good reason to believe that that limit could be surpassed?

Indeed, as the member just mentioned, would it not be better to follow the example of countries that are setting much higher limits as a guarantee that companies will do everything they can, knowing the consequences they face in the event of a tragedy?

Mr. Peter Julian: Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague from Outremont for his question.

He is quite right. It is important to establish a strategy that includes other kinds of energy.

Fortunately, we in the NDP have done so recently, with the energy plan we are currently establishing in order to really create a new kind of sustainable development in Canada. We believe that a vast majority of Canadians support this new kind of development.

I know the hon. member represents a very important community in Quebec and I also know that he is worried about the position of the Bloc Québécois, who wanted to follow the NDP's lead regarding Bill C-5, but who threw in the towel and said they would stop

fighting the Conservative government, as one Bloc member just mentioned.

The Bloc says the Conservatives and the Liberals are too strong and that it cannot do anything. We saw this with the softwood lumber agreement and we are seeing it again with air safety. Time and time again, the Bloc Québécois refuses to represent Quebeckers —

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): It is with regret that I must interrupt the hon. member for Burnaby—New Westminster. We are now resuming debate.

The hon. member for Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel would like to take the floor, but it is the member for Outremont's turn to speak.

Mr. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP): Mr. Speaker, such excitement. For a moment I thought the member for Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel would speak, but no. Maybe one day we will hear his voice in this House.

We are talking about an extremely important bill that aims to relieve the nuclear industry of its responsibility. Nuclear energy represents very real dangers. Because using nuclear energy to produce electricity is so dangerous, the Conservative government, which has no vision for sustainable development, wants to make things easier for companies should an accident occur.

What I am about to say may seem incredible, but to the south of us, in the United States, the limit on compensation that could be paid out for a nuclear accident is \$10 billion. The Conservatives would like to set the limit at \$650 million. However, we know that the total cost of damages from an accident like Chernobyl would be hundreds of billions of dollars. For a single accident. The proposed amount is obviously insufficient. It does not even represent 1% of the potential damages in the event of an accident, which is not something anyone wants to see happen, of course.

How did we get to this point? The answer is simple. For at least the past 13 years, the Liberals claimed they were doing something about sustainable development, but in reality they were not. They were all talk and no action, as is their habit. Although we do not agree with the Conservatives, at least they do not pretend to care about future generations. All they want to do is get as much as they can now, look after today and let tomorrow look after itself. That is their attitude, and it is reflected in all their decisions.

We are faced with a situation that came about through Liberal inaction: no vision, no plan for clean, renewable energy, no hydrogen, no wind power, no solar power or hydro. What we have instead is an attempt to promote nuclear power in Ontario and Saskatchewan.

I want to be very clear. The NDP is opposed to any new nuclear infrastructure in Canada. We find it regrettable that, instead of looking at potential energy sources—and what Quebec is doing is a perfect example—instead of developing clean, renewable energy sources, the government is relying on a technology that is more than 60 years old.

Government Orders

As I just demonstrated with the case of Chernobyl, in Ukraine, nuclear accidents can have devastating consequences. I am talking about damage in the hundreds of billions of dollars, as well as tens of thousands of deaths. Many people died immediately, as a direct result of the accident, but a huge number of people also developed cancer. By looking at the concentric circles emanating out to Europe from Chernobyl, we can even see changes in types of cancer 5, 10 and 15 years after the accident, which occurred about 20 years ago.

I am reading a book about Chernobyl and was interested to see that the accident prompted Gorbachev and Reagan to focus on the urgent need to work for peace. However, it seems as though these lessons—pursuing peace and working to eliminate the real danger of any form of nuclear energy, whether it be a nuclear weapon or, in the case of Chernobyl again, a series of reactors to produce electricity that could get out of control—are often lost.

Let us look at how extraordinary Canada is. It is the second largest country in the world, in terms of geographic area, with a small population of barely 35 million. In this country, solutions have varied over the years and generating electricity is a provincial and local responsibility. We could work, for example, with wind energy. Did you know that Quebec is heading toward a production of 4,000 megawatts? That means 4,000 times a million watts in wind energy. We have potential wind energy sites all across Canada, in other words, sites that are particularly favourable for generating wind energy, particularly in regions where first nations live.

Last week, quite rightfully, the government apologized for some of the harm caused to the first nations. What an incredible opportunity for us to have a vision of the future, to work with the provinces, which are primarily responsible, to provide incentives, including tax programs, to develop clean and renewable energy that comes from the wind.

• (1710)

If we combine wind energy with hydroelectricity, which is often a potential source of energy across Canada, we can, when weather and market conditions are suitable—why not export clean, renewable energy if we have it in abundance?—we can create something that is sustainable and also very useful for future generations.

Quebec's current finance minister, Monique Jérôme-Forget, recently went to different capital cities to explain the intrinsic value of Hydro-Québec, and I must admit that I more or less agree with her. She was talking about the wealth that can be created, but the Conservatives do not see it that way. To them, the only thing worth doing in Canada is to develop the oil sands in Alberta as quickly as possible and soon those in Saskatchewan, too.

In an extraordinary new book by Montreal journalist William Marsden, aptly entitled *Stupid to the Last Drop*, he considers the oil sands and recalls a historical fact. In the early 1950s, the suggestion was made that to get oil out of the oil sands in Alberta, it would be a good idea to set off atomic bombs here and there throughout that province. Plans were created and analyses carried out. It would not surprise me to learn that they actually tried that.

Something almost as stupid is now being proposed: the construction of a number of nuclear plants to generate the steam used to extract the oil from the tar sands. This is already an

unsustainable situation. Natural gas is presently used to extract oil from tar sands. And the oil is being exported directly to the United States without any value added.

This is somewhat similar to the mistake made, generation after generation, with respect to our forests. My colleague just explained to us how ridiculous it was to sell out to the Americans. Even if there were real concerns about the sustainability of certain forestry practices, that did not at all justify, in light of NAFTA, giving away \$1 billion just to settle the dispute. But that is what was done. We were directly exporting our forest products, while the value added, the processing, was done elsewhere, primarily in the United States. Most of the time, this is also true of ores and our other resources from the primary sector.

The same thing is happening with oil. The new Keystone project, just approved by the National Energy Board, proposes to export 200 million litres per day to the United States. Despite the problems of extracting the oil and the pollution that already exists in Canada, the errors will be stupidly compounded by exporting the oil in bulk to the United States, along with all the jobs in processing.

For the Keystone project alone, that amounts to 18,000 jobs that will be exported to the United States. The environmental problems will be placed on our shoulders and on those of future generations and the first nations. All the benefits will be exported. With regard to the obvious problem of NAFTA, we are creating a situation where the Americans can, under the NAFTA rules of proportionality, demand that we continue sending the same amount.

This bill exemplifies the Conservatives' lack of vision in terms of energy production. They have gone so far as to draft a bill to help the nuclear industry avoid its civil responsibility. It is outright shameful and I am very proud to be a member of the only political party that has the courage to rise in the House of Commons and to express its disapproval. I am very disappointed that the Bloc and the Liberals support the Conservatives in this matter.

• (1715)

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I believe the member has a good understanding of the problem with this bill. He was once Quebec's environment minister. Therefore, he has a lot of experience with the need to develop a long-term plan, with environmental requirements, and with the effects of power-generating projects. The NDP is opposed to this bill and to the development of the nuclear industry.

[English]

The reason for our opposition is there are so many issues of liability as well as unanswered questions.

Government Orders

Clearly no one has never come up with a plan for the waste, for the MOX fuel, for the spent rods and for the contamination that is created in the nuclear industry. It is shipped in barrels and moved on trucks. Continually the great lands of the north are looked at as an ideal dumping ground. I am proud to say the citizens of Timmins—James Bay will stand steadfast in ensuring that such waste is never dumped on us. However, there is lack of a plan for contaminated substance that has thousands of years of liability and impact on the environment.

From his many years of experience with the Government of Quebec, could he explain to us, if this process is so safe, why we still have not found anybody, any jurisdiction or any way of addressing or accepting the waste left from these projects?

[Translation]

Mr. Thomas Mulcair: Mr. Speaker, my colleague and friend, the member for Timmins—James Bay, has hit the nail right on the head with his question. That is where the real problems of sustainable development, longevity and viability arise.

Like him, people on Quebec's North Shore are concerned about certain companies. This concern is not merely theoretical. There are some companies—and I can comment on them because I knew them when I was Quebec's environment minister—that have definite designs on the region because they think there is nothing there, nothing but a few people, anyway. They think the place is huge and that they can always dig deep enough.

That is exactly the mentality underlying this bill. The fact that they are exploring the vast reaches of northern Ontario and Quebec looking for places to dig and bury waste, hoping that it will not escape somehow, which makes no sense at all, is proof positive of the problems inherent in nuclear development, just like the problems with this bill to limit liability.

The very idea of limiting liability reveals the danger this kind of activity poses. The government recognizes these threats, but it does not want to reduce them; it wants to limit companies' liability. That is why this bill is so shameful, and that is why it is so unfortunate that the Bloc Québécois and the Liberals are supporting the Conservatives on this one.

• (1720)

[English]

Ms. Catherine Bell (Vancouver Island North, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I referred to the bill as a sad case of trying to introduce carbon offsets for our greenhouse gases in the oil sands. The Conservative government seems to think nuclear is clean energy and it is sadly mistaken.

Because my time is so short, does my hon. colleague think the \$650 million, this small amount of money attributed to operators of nuclear facilities, is basically a devaluing of Canadian communities? So many communities that have nuclear facilities are populated areas with businesses, families and homes and these assets are worth a lot more, collectively, than \$650 million. Is it a sellout to our Canadian communities to not go with an unlimited liability?

Mr. Thomas Mulcair: Mr. Speaker, my colleague is exactly right. It is a further illustration of the fact that the Conservatives simply do not believe in sustainable development. What is saddening today is

the Liberals and the Bloc are endorsing their positions against sustainable development.

Mr. Bill Siksay (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to participate, at least for a little while, in this important debate on Bill C-5, An Act respecting civil liability and compensation for damage in case of a nuclear incident, also known as the nuclear liability compensation act, or as some of my colleagues in this corner of the House have referred to it as the worst nuclear practices act.

That should give an indication of where New Democrats stand on this issue. We have been very opposed to the legislation. We thought it needed significant improvement before we would be able to support it. Unfortunately, despite doing our best in committee and later here in the House, those improvements did not happen and the bill is headed to be endorsed by the Liberals, the Bloc and the Conservatives. We think that is very disappointing for Canadians.

We know many Canadians have very serious concerns about nuclear energy. We know many Canadians understand that nuclear energy is not green energy, that the potential for accidents, the safety concerns surrounding nuclear energy, are very significant. Also the serious concerns about the disposal of waste from the nuclear power process have also baffled and troubled Canada for many years.

The member for Timmins—James Bay made it very clear that attempts to deposit waste from nuclear plants in northern Ontario will be resisted by the people of northern Ontario again and again because of the problems with that kind of process and waste.

There are many problems with the legislation. The legislation was developed to limit the amount of damages a nuclear power plant operator or fuel processor would pay out should there be an accident causing radiological contamination to property outside the plant area itself. The legislation really only applies to power plants and to fuel processors. Those unfortunately are not the only places where nuclear material is used, where there is the potential of an accident that might cause a claim for liability and compensation.

The current legislation dates from the 1970s and it is incredibly inadequate. We know changes are needed to that legislation. Right now under the existing legislation the liability limit is only \$75 million, which is a pittance when we consider the kinds of accidents and liability claims that might come about as the result of a nuclear accident.

The proposal before us, however, only considers raising that to \$650 million, which is the rock bottom of the international average of this kind of legislation around the world. We know, for instance, the liability in Japan is unlimited, with each operator having to carry private insurance of \$30 million. The liability in Germany is also unlimited, except for nuclear accidents caused by war, and each operator has to have almost \$500 million in private insurance. That is a far different approach than we take in Canada. Even in the United States, there is a limit of \$9.7 billion U.S., with each operator needing up to \$200 million in insurance.

The Conservatives' attempt pales by comparison with the assessment of other countries of what the level of liability, what the dollar amount attached to liability, should be. It is easy to understand why it should be so high when we consider the kinds of problems that would result from a serious nuclear accident.

The problem also with the legislation is that once the \$650 million liability threshold is reached, the Canadian taxpayers are on the hook for the rest. A nuclear operator would only have to pay out a maximum of \$650 million, while the public would be on the hook for millions, possibly billions of dollars in the case of an accident. There would be a special tribunal set up by the Minister of Natural Resources to look at the liability beyond \$650 million and that liability would be paid out of the public purse. That is not an appropriate approach that Canadian taxpayers could support.

There are a lot of concerns. Many believe the legislation is an attempt to make the situation for the privatization of Canada's nuclear industry more attractive to foreign corporations to step in and get involved in the ownership of the Canadian nuclear industry, that the Conservatives have a plan to move that way. Given some of their other movements and their other steps, it is hard not to believe that it is what they have in mind.

• (1725)

British Columbia fortunately does not have nuclear power generation, but we are concerned about nuclear power and fuel processing at the Hanford station in Washington state in the U.S. It has been a long time source of concern for many people in British Columbia. We know that over many years the nine nuclear reactors and five massive plutonium processing complexes put nuclear radioactive contamination into the air and into the water of the Columbia River.

Thankfully the Hanford site has been decommissioned and is now in the process of a huge clean up, which will cost a minimum of \$2 billion a year, and this clean up will go on for many decades. There are other specialized facilities to aid in the clean up, like the vitrification plant, which is one method designed to combine dangerous waste with glass to render it stable. That facility will cost \$12 billion. Sadly the clean up has been put off. The timelines originally scheduled will not be met.

Billions of dollars are being spent just to remediate a former nuclear processing plant area and a nuclear generating site. This shows the extreme cost of an accident, which would be far more expensive.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): It being 5:30 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's order paper.

When we return to the study of Bill C-5, there will still be three minutes for the hon. member for Burnaby—Douglas.

Adjournment Proceedings

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

• (1730)

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): The hon. member for Abitibi—Témiscamingue is not present to move the motion for second reading of Bill C-521, An Act to provide for the transfer of the surplus in the Employment Insurance Account, as announced in today's notice paper. Pursuant to Standing Order 94, since this is the second time this item has not been dealt with on the dates established by the order of precedence, the bill will be dropped from the order paper.

[*English*]

Hon. Karen Redman: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I believe if you were to seek it, you would find unanimous consent to see the clock at 6:30 p.m.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

[*English*]

ELECTIONS CANADA

Hon. Karen Redman (Kitchener Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I previously asked a question about election expenses in this House during question period. I was very disappointed with the stonewalling that I was still getting from the Conservative government.

I would point out that in the last election the Conservative Party defined itself as a party that would champion transparency and accountability in government, yet since the Conservatives have come to government, we have seen anything but.

I happen to be a member of the procedure and House affairs committee. We sat for seven months and listened to government members stonewall and filibuster very legitimate work that needed to get done. There was legislation that needed to go through, but the government members on the procedure and House affairs committee were so worried about Elections Canada's challenge of their in and out scheme during the last election that they did not want it to be scrutinized by the committee.

I would point out that it is the legitimate purview of several committees to look at aspects of this in and out scheme. As a matter of fact, today the ethics committee passed a motion and it will examine this.

Quite clearly it fell within the purview, among other committees, of the procedure and House affairs committee to look at this. This is a scheme to pay for national advertising by transferring the funds to individual ridings.

Adjournment Proceedings

It is very important to point out that in the Canadian electoral system there is an attempt to make a very level playing field by having campaign limits for every member in each riding. The limit is based on the number of electors in that riding. There are also limits on how much can be spent for advertising nationally by individual parties.

It was the view of the Chief Electoral Officer that the Conservative Party alone—I would point out it was not the NDP, not our Bloc colleagues and not the Liberal Party, but the Conservative Party alone—had inappropriately flowed \$1.2 million of spending in a scheme that was labelled in and out. The reason it has that label is it was called that by individual candidates, former candidates. As a matter of fact, 67 ridings were involved in this scheme. Candidates themselves and official agents said that they objected to the fact that they had received a phone call saying that a certain amount of money—and the amounts varied; it could be \$5,000 or \$28,000—was going to be transfer into their account and they would be sent a bill which they had to pay and transfer the money out, sometimes within a few hours within the same calendar day.

This scheme appears to have been centrally orchestrated. As a matter of fact it is even talked about in a book that was written by a former Conservative organizer. By using this scheme, they circumvented the advertising limit by \$1.2 million.

My question is really quite simple. If this government truly believes in transparency, if it truly believes in accountability, what is it hiding? Why will the Conservatives not allow a parliamentary committee to scrutinize this?

I look forward to the ethics committee looking at this and hearing some witnesses. Then we can find out what really happened and make sure that it does not happen again.

• (1735)

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Poilievre (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this gives me the opportunity today to talk about a very interesting issue that has been the source of much debate for several months.

[English]

This week we learned in a *Globe and Mail* report, which was founded on a group of access to information requests, that in addition to breaking its own rules when it carried out its search warrant on the Conservative Party headquarters, Elections Canada was also totally preoccupied with its own media image and the media consequences of its visit to our headquarters.

There were pages and pages of emails that went back and forth discussing the public relations implications of the visit to the Conservative Party headquarters. That does indeed speak to the motives for that strange and unjustifiable visit that Elections Canada paid to the Conservative Party headquarters some months ago.

We have been trying to get to the bottom of this. In numerous parliamentary committees, Conservatives have moved for there to be an investigation on the subject. We want all parties to come clean and share their financial practices from the last several elections. We

voted in favour of allowing such an investigation. We want our books to be publicly investigated at those committees. We encourage all parties to show the same openness that we have shown.

The member across the way said that Elections Canada has shown no interest in her party's finances, nor should anyone else. If she has nothing to hide, however, she will welcome a thorough probe of Liberal practices and Liberal transactions. We know that the Liberal Party transferred about \$1.7 million to local riding associations, which then transferred back about \$1.3 million.

There is nothing wrong with those transactions. They are perfectly legal. In fact, they are expressly legal under the Canada Elections Act. We would simply like to make that point by making obvious comparisons between the various parties to show the parallels of which I have just finished speaking.

We are really accused of four things. I will ask members which one of them is illegal.

We are accused of having transferred money from the national party to local campaigns. That is expressly legal in the law. All parties do it.

We are accused of having those local ridings transfer the money back to the national party. That too is expressly legal in the law. All parties do it.

We are accused of running national content in local advertising, that is to say, national leaders, national policy, national items in these locally expensed ads. Not only is that legal, in fact it is customary. More of the material that local candidates put in their mailers and other advertisements is national than is local, because of course they are running for a national office.

Finally, local Conservative candidates are accused of having run advertisements that actually aired outside of the constituency for which they were paid. Not only is that legal, it is impossible to avoid. If I were to buy a radio ad, as I have done in the past, as a candidate in southwest Ottawa, that advertisement would by necessity run all over eastern Ontario because there is no uniquely Nepean—Carleton radio station. It would run in probably about 13 or 14 constituencies in two provinces. There is no getting around that.

On all four of the pillars of this accusation that the opposition and Elections Canada have created, we are not only legal but we are very conventional in the way we do our work.

Hon. Karen Redman: Mr. Speaker, it is interesting that there is a selective knowledge or reporting of the Canada Elections Act.

I would point out to this House and to Canadians who are watching this across Canada that every candidate and every official agent signs off on their statements of account. There are a lot of rules and we are asked to abide by them.

From time to time Elections Canada will come back and ask individual members to look at receipts, to provide more information, and we do that gladly. As a matter of fact, if we are in contravention of that, we cannot take our seats in the House. This is not something to be taken lightly and the law of elections in Canada should not be considered to be applied loosely.

Adjournment Proceedings

Elections Canada has cited the Conservative Party in the last election as having a systematic scheme of contravening—

• (1740)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): The member for Nepean—Carleton.

Mr. Pierre Poilievre: Mr. Speaker, she is right. We all file election returns and all of the information on which the Elections Canada accusations are predicated came from voluntary disclosures by the Conservative Party and its candidates. Every shred of information that led them to make these false accusations came from us.

Let me summarize. Conservative candidates spent Conservative funds on Conservative advertisements. They got financial assistance and transfers from the national party to do so. Elections Canada found out about it because we told them, and why would we not tell Elections Canada? Those practices are legal and all parties do it.

They singled us out. We took them to court, and one day before they were to be questioned, they interrupted the proceedings, breaking their own rules, and barged into our office with Liberal cameras following behind.

CLUSTER BOMBS

Mr. Mario Silva (Davenport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, historically, Canada has always been proud to be a world leader in advancing peace around the world. This fact was clear on March 1, 1999, when the eyes of the world were on Canada as the Liberal foreign affairs minister, Lloyd Axworthy, hosted and championed the signing of the Ottawa convention banning the manufacture and use of landmines.

However, as we all know, this convention did not include a ban on so-called cluster munitions.

All weapons of war, from the most rudimentary to the most highly sophisticated instruments of destruction, are contrary to any fundamental concept of human dignity. However, the intensely insidious nature of cluster munitions even manages to set them apart from other weapons.

These are horrible weapons that do not differentiate between civilians and military targets. They are used primarily from aircraft and descend in a spiral of destruction that often blanket vast tracks of land indiscriminately. These cluster munitions not only fail to differentiate between civilian and military targets, they often maim and kill civilians long after they have been deployed since many remain unexploded.

Beginning in Oslo, Norway in February 2007 and moving through to Wellington, New Zealand one year later in 2008, the process of developing a cluster munitions convention has often been challenging.

While many across the world looked to Canada to take the lead in promoting this convention, it is with dismay that we instead witnessed Canada, along with several other states, pushing for the inclusion of article 21. This article is viewed by many as a loophole that, while still preventing Canada from producing, stockpiling or directly using cluster munitions, does not prevent this country from conducting military operations with a third party state that has not

signed the convention and that may indeed elect to use cluster munitions in the course of a joint combat operation.

In the words of Mr. Paul Hannon of Mines Action Canada, he stated:

In our view, there is only one small stain on the fabric of this fine treaty text, which is the additional article added related to participating in joint operations.

When the history of the process leading to this convention is written, it unfortunately will include reference to the fact that instead of leading the world toward a conclusive and non-negotiable treaty banning cluster munitions, the Government of Canada was attempting to water down its objectives.

While we all celebrate the results of the Dublin meeting and the participation of so many states in the process of banning cluster munitions, our joy is tempered by the fact that instead of leading the way, the Canadian government was, in the eyes of many observers, simply representing the concerns of nations that chose not to sign the convention.

The government must represent the views of the Canadian people and the fundamental values of this nation. While Canada may have signed the convention, we most certainly take little comfort in the role of the government in the process leading up to and including the Dublin meetings.

Mr. Laurie Hawn (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Davenport's question provides me with an opportunity to elaborate on Canada's effort to address the terrible impact on civilians of cluster munitions and other weapons as well.

Like landmines, cluster munitions have had a devastating impact on civilians at the time of use and often for years or even decades after the conflict has ended. Canada has never used cluster munitions and we are in the process of destroying all cluster munitions in the Canadian Forces' arsenal.

Canada has also been heavily engaged in the international effort to strengthen the international humanitarian law with respect to this weapon. Canada is among those countries working hard to get agreement to negotiate a new protocol addressing cluster munitions within the traditional disarmament framework of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons or CCW.

In addition, Canada has been an active participant in the Oslo process initiated by Norway that seeks to put in place by the end of this year a new stand alone treaty that addresses cluster munitions. A Canadian delegation comprised of officials from the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade and the Department of National Defence was in Oslo when this process was initiated in February 2007.

The same delegation participated in pre-negotiation conferences in Lima in May 2007, in Vienna in December, and in Wellington, New Zealand in February of this year. Canada was also an active participant in the formal negotiation of this new treaty in Dublin from May 19-30.

Adjournment Proceedings

I am delighted to report that Canada and the 110 other states participating in these negotiations unanimously adopted the final negotiated text for a new legally binding instrument. If it enters into force, this treaty would: ban all cluster munitions, as defined in the convention text; set specific deadlines for the destruction of stockpiles of cluster munitions and clearance of contaminated areas; provide for risk education for vulnerable populations and assistance for victims, their families and communities; obligate states in a position to do so to assist affected states to fulfill their responsibilities under the convention; and allow states to engage effectively in combined military operations with states not party to the convention, in deference to reality.

The Convention on Cluster Munitions will be opened for signature in Oslo in December of this year.

This is a significant achievement in multilateral disarmament diplomacy. This new convention, the culmination of 18 months work between civil society groups and participating states is no small feat. Canada and other states around the world must now consider the convention text carefully to determine whether or not to proceed with formal signature and ratification of this instrument.

Concurrently, Canada, in cooperation with like-minded states, will continue to pursue complementary efforts to address cluster munitions within the traditional framework of the Convention on Conventional Weapons. I am confident our collective efforts will contribute a great deal to the protection of civilians from cluster munitions.

I would be remiss if I did not mention the member for Westlock—St. Paul who has been instrumental in Canada's efforts in this area and has done a lot of work in bringing awareness of this situation.

• (1745)

Mr. Mario Silva: Mr. Speaker, the Dublin convention is a profoundly important step toward a better world as was the 1999 Ottawa convention. In the latter, Canada took the lead in demonstrating to the world our profound commitment to building

a better world where horrific weapons of destruction are relegated to the pages of history where they belong.

In the case of this convention banning cluster munitions, we must take note of the fact that the role of Canada in 2008 was so vastly different than that of 1999. In 1999, Canada's position was consistent with the values of our country and what the world had come to expect from us. Unfortunately, the same cannot be said of the government's representation of our country in 2008.

Irrespective of these realities, we must all work to promote the ban on cluster munitions as we have done with landmines and in so doing continue to work diligently toward a better world where such weapons have no place.

Mr. Laurie Hawn: Mr. Speaker, Canada is deeply concerned about the impact of armed conflict on civilians. Canada remains committed to banning anti-personnel landmines and has been an active participant in efforts to address the humanitarian and development impact of cluster munitions.

I have never dropped a cluster bomb, but I have trained with them and I have trained people on how to deploy them. I am very aware of the impact of cluster munitions and the dangers they pose at the time of use and for a long time after that.

I can assure the hon. member that this party, this government, and this individual are very committed to the elimination of cluster munitions if at all possible and we will work with all of our colleagues and states around the world to advance that cause just as far as absolutely possible.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted.

[*Translation*]

The House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 5:49 p.m.)

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