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OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Thursday, October 10, 2002

Speaker: The Honourable Peter Milliken

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, October 10, 2002

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

• (1000)

[Translation]

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): I have the honour to place on the table pursuant to section 39(1) of the Access to Information Act, a special report to Parliament entitled "Response to the Report of the Access to Information Review Task Force".

This document is deemed permanently referred to the Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

SUPREME COURT OF CANADA APPOINTMENT

Mr. Geoff Regan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, a copy of the commission constituting the Hon. Marie Deschamps, Puisne Judge of the Supreme Court of Canada, Deputy of the Governor General, to do, in Her Excellency's name, all acts on her part necessary to be done during Her Excellency's pleasure, dated August 7, 2002.

* * *

ORDER IN COUNCIL APPOINTMENTS

Mr. Geoff Regan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I also am pleased to table, in both official languages, a number of order in council appointments made recently by the government.

* * *

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Geoff Regan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8) I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to five petitions.

• (1005)

[Translation]

POINTS OF ORDER

PUBLIC WORKS AND GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. This week we raised a very specific problem with the Chair, and the situation is repeating itself today. I would like to draw it to your attention.

A little earlier this week, we were indignant about the softwood lumber assistance plan not being tabled in the House of Commons, as it should have been, but elsewhere instead.

To some extent, you agreed with us and I would remind you that, this morning, I was expecting the Minister of Public Works to table the internal audit report concerning the sponsorship program.

We have learned from the current events on the Hill for today that the Minister of Public Works is going to release the internal audit report on the sponsorship scandal at 2 p.m. today outside this House, whereas this is supposed to be done in the House of Commons.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask you this: does this not go directly against the argument we made earlier this week in this House, namely that important documents should be tabled in the House of Commons at the appropriate time?

Also, to conclude, I emphasize that tabling the internal investigation report at 2 o'clock this afternoon, outside the House of Commons, denies the opposition access to the document to analyze it and question the government in the House of Commons today, Thursday, this being the last significant oral question period before next week's recess. In other words, by not abiding by the spirit of the Standing Orders, the Minister of Public Works is gagging the opposition, preventing us from doing our job on this issue, where the government is involved in one of the worst scandals to date.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask that you remind the hon. Minister of Public Works that the document in question ought to be tabled in this place at 10 o'clock this morning, so that opposition members can use it to question the government about the sponsorship scandal. Instead, they are gagging us, ignoring the rights of the House and of its members, and going against the spirit of the Standing Orders and what was advocated in this place this week.

Routine Proceedings

The fact that such a major report is scheduled to be tabled at the very time that statements by members and oral question period get under way start speaks volumes about the public works minister's desire to deny parliamentarians the chance, just before the recess, to see all that is contained in this report, hoping that this news will become old news over our week off.

On behalf of the Bloc Québécois—and of all opposition parties, I am sure—I must say I find it unacceptable that we should be prevented from questioning the government on such an incriminating report. I ask that you remind the government of its obligation to table important documents in the appropriate place, that is in the House of Commons, and at the appropriate time, not when it suits the government, to prevent us from asking questions.

Hon. Don Boudria (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, very briefly, if the member will be patient, I will leave the House in a few minutes to get some information on this and I will come back to make a point of order in 15 or 20 minutes to inform the House about this.

As is the case every morning, we have taken a look at all the major issues. I must say that I was not aware of this one. As is often the case, I had the opportunity to talk with my counterparts from the opposition earlier this morning and they did not raise this issue either.

I will get some information right now and I will report to the House by making a point of order in a few minutes, after the bills are introduced in the House.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): We will wait for the leader of the government to report back.

[*English*]

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we appreciate the government House leader's intervention but it does not necessarily end the point of order. It seems to me that the government House leader should realize that the government has an opportunity here to make good on whatever contrition it felt as a result of what happened earlier in the week. Therefore I would certainly urge the government to take seriously the objections of the House leader of the Bloc Québécois with respect to this matter and make sure that the House for once is properly respected with respect to the kind of information the government intends to make available later this afternoon.

• (1010)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): As you have said it so well, let us give the government a chance to work on this problem.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

EXPORT AND IMPORT OF ROUGH DIAMONDS ACT

Hon. Herb Dhaliwal (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-14, an act providing for controls on the export, import or transit across Canada of rough diamonds and for a certification scheme for their export in order to meet Canada's obligations under the Kimberley Process.

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

* * *

[*Translation*]

THE PENSION BENEFITS STANDARDS ACT, 1985

Ms. Pauline Picard (Drummond, BQ) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-226, An Act to amend the Pension Benefits Standards Act, 1985 (investment criteria).

She said: Mr. Speaker, the text of this bill amends the Pension Benefits Standards Act, 1985, to require the administrators of pension funds to prepare an annual report on the social, ethical and environmental factors that have been considered in the selection, retention and liquidation of investments.

I remind the House that half the money traded on world financial markets belong to small investors in pension funds. This represents about \$90 billion for businesses under federal control. This bill would provide a better framework for investments.

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

* * *

[*English*]

VIMY RIDGE DAY ACT

Mr. Brent St. Denis (Algoma—Manitoulin, Lib.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-227, an act respecting a national day of remembrance of the Battle of Vimy Ridge.

He said: Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 86.1, I ask that the bill be reinstated at the same stage that it was when the session broke, which was that it had concluded second reading and was referred to the heritage committee. I appreciate the agreement of the House at that time.

I just want to point out that the Battle of Vimy Ridge, which took place on April 9, 1917, was a turning point in World War I. The Canadians, who fought together with numerous battalions for the first time and under Canadian command, took Vimy Ridge, which was a turning point in World War I, and earned Canada a place at the table of the signing of the Treaty of Versailles.

I want to thank Bob Manuel of Elliot Lake for his great effort to bring a citizen's initiative like this forward. For greater clarity, April 9 of each year would not be a statutory holiday but a day of recognition of this very important historical event.

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

• (1015)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): The Chair is satisfied that the bill is in the same form as Bill C-409 was at the time of prorogation of the first session, 37th Parliament. Accordingly, pursuant to Standing Order 86(1), the bill is deemed read a second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage.

(Bill read the second time and referred to a committee)

* * *

[Translation]

PETITIONS

CHILD PORNOGRAPHY

Mr. Jeannot Castonguay (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I have the pleasure of submitting two petitions signed by constituents of Edmonton West, who condemn any form of creation and use of child pornography.

Therefore, the petitioners call upon Parliament to protect our children and take all necessary steps to ensure that all material that promotes and glorifies pedophilia and sadomasochism be declared illegal.

[English]

SOFTWOOD LUMBER

Mr. James Lunney (Nanaimo—Alberni, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions this morning. The first has to do with the softwood lumber dispute. There are some 150 signatures from the people of Port Alberni, Parksville, Duncan and other coastal communities. The petition has even greater significance in light of the fact that there were four more mill closures just one week ago today and some 500 more jobs lost in a community of about 18,000.

The petitioners are calling upon the government to act speedily to end this softwood lumber dispute. Further, they are calling for a ban on the export of logs to the United States while this dispute continues.

STEM CELL RESEARCH

Mr. James Lunney (Nanaimo—Alberni, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the second petition has to do with stem cell research. In light of the fact that just yesterday Bill C-56 was reintroduced to the House the importance of these signatures is even more significant.

The petitioners are taking note of debilitating diseases, such as Parkinson's, Alzheimer's, diabetes, cancer and spinal cord injury, noting that ethical stem cell research offers an opportunity to advance cures for these conditions.

The petitioners further take note of the fact that adult stem cell research avoids the complication of tissue rejection and anti-rejection drugs. They encourage Parliament to consider wholehearted support for adult stem cell research.

COAST GUARD

Mr. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of some 400 constituents in my riding of Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca who would like changes to the Coast Guard diving regulations.

The petitioners would like to see the Coast Guard made an independent body, whose priority is the saving of lives, separate from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans with all the necessary resources for staffing and equipment, including a new Hovercraft, to enable it to perform the rescues of those in peril.

Routine Proceedings

CHILD PORNOGRAPHY

Mr. Paul Bonwick (Simcoe—Grey, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions this morning to present to the House on behalf of the residents of Simcoe—Grey. The first petition concerns child pornography.

Residents of Canada draw the attention of the House to the following: that the creation and use of child pornography is condemned by the clear majority of Canadians; and that the courts have not applied the current child pornography laws in a way which makes it clear that such exploitation of children will always be met with swift punishment.

The petitioners therefore call upon Parliament to protect their children by taking all necessary steps to ensure that all materials which promote or glorify pedophiles or sado-masochistic activities involving children are outlawed.

STEM CELL RESEARCH

Mr. Paul Bonwick (Simcoe—Grey, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my second petition is on behalf of residents in the south end of my riding. The petition deals with stem cell research. There are over 300 signatures on it.

Residents of Canada draw the attention of the House to the following: that hundreds of thousands of Canadians suffer from debilitating illnesses and diseases, such as Parkinson's, Alzheimer's, diabetes, cancer, muscular dystrophy and spinal cord injury; that Canadians support ethical stem cell research which has always shown encouraging potential to provide cures and therapies for these illnesses and diseases; and that non-embryonic stem cells, which are also known as adult stem cells, have shown significant research progress without the immune rejection or ethical problems associated with embryonic stem cells.

Therefore, the petitioners call upon Parliament to focus its legislative support on adult stem cell research to find cures and therapies necessary to treat the illnesses and diseases of suffering Canadians.

• (1020)

[Translation]

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mr. Gérard Asselin (Charlevoix, BQ): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I am presenting two petitions signed by more than 1,000 petitioners. The petitions concern the redistribution of economic regions for employment insurance purposes.

The changes in EI economic region boundaries in Manicouagan and Charlevoix are causing serious hardship to the people of these two ridings. Furthermore, the proposition is not consistent with the employment insurance rules pertaining to the uniformity of the labour market and the adjoining regions.

Therefore, the petitioners ask that Parliament revise its administrative redistribution of the region so that the federal ridings of Manicouagan and Charlevoix are once again united and part of the former administrative region of northern Quebec.

*Government Orders***QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER**

Mr. Geoff Regan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I ask that the remaining questions be allowed to stand.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

NUCLEAR SAFETY AND CONTROL ACT

Hon. Herb Dhaliwal (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.) moved that Bill C-4, an act to amend the Nuclear Safety and Control Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I rise to address the House at second reading of Bill C-4, an act to amend the Nuclear Safety and Control Act. It gives me great pleasure to stand before the House today in support of this bill. It is a one clause bill with the same provision as that contained in Bill C-57 introduced in the House in May 2002.

The amendment clarifies the wording in subsection 46(3) of the act which has had the consequence of extending the obligation for site remediation beyond the owners and managers to private sector lending institutions. This is an anomaly that must be corrected.

Under the current wording of subsection 46(3), the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission has the authority to order the owner or occupant or any other person with a right to or an interest in to take prescribed measures to reduce the level of radioactive contamination. This proposed amendment clarifies the subsection by deleting the words "person with a right or interest in" and replacing them with the words "person who has the management and control".

This subsection has discouraged the private sector from lending to the nuclear industry. The industry is a vital component of the Canadian economy. It includes electric power plants, uranium mines and refineries. Nuclear energy supplies 13% of Canada's electricity. It thus contributes to the diversity which helps to ensure the security of our energy supply.

The nuclear industry is more than electricity, however. Nuclear technology has daily applications in industry, material science and in sterilizing medical items. Medical isotopes produced in reactors are used to diagnose and treat disease. In fact, Canada is a world leader in producing medical isotopes which are used around the globe.

The amendment serves to clarify the risk for institutions lending to companies in the nuclear industry. A lender who goes into management and control of a nuclear facility would be within the reach of this subsection.

No other industrial sector or power generation sector is encumbered by a federal provision of this nature that discourages their access to bank lending. For example, the chemical and natural gas industries do not have the problem we are trying to fix.

The nuclear industry must have access to commercial credit to finance its needs, just like any other sector. This amendment will

allow the nuclear industry to attract market capital and equity. It is not, and should not be misconstrued as, a measure to provide favourable treatment to the nuclear industry. All the stringent mechanisms embodied in the Nuclear Safety and Control Act and regulations, which are designed to ensure that nuclear facilities are managed in a safe and environmentally sound manner, are still in place and unaffected by this provision.

For example, in the class 1 nuclear facilities regulations, which deal with the large power reactors, the commission requires industry to provide detailed information about their environmental protection policies and procedures, effluent and environmental monitoring programs and environmental baseline studies. The commission continues to have the authority to act to suspend the licence for any activity when it concludes that the activity carried on poses an unreasonable risk to the environment, health and safety or security. These examples show that the commission's mandate to prevent unreasonable risk to the environment will continue to be fulfilled.

Nuclear power is a proven technology for generating electricity. It has been in commercial operation in Canada for more than 30 years. There are currently 438 nuclear power plants around the world, producing 16% of the world's electricity. The only non-greenhouse gas emitting source which produces a larger share of the world's electricity is hydro power, which produces 19%.

Governments are encouraging more private sector participation in the ownership and management of facilities in all energy sectors. Companies with nuclear operations need access to the same financial instruments available to other companies. This means that companies need the participation of banks and other financial organizations to attract market capital and equity to finance ongoing and future operations.

● (1025)

We must be fair and consistent. We must ensure that all companies have an equal opportunity to conduct their business and to better position themselves in the marketplace. At the same time we must ensure that these companies are fully responsible for environmental stewardship. This approach maintains the authority of the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission to take the necessary measures for site remediation against those who have management and control.

The bill will put us in a win-win situation. It will not in any way weaken Canada's stringent licensing and regulatory regime, which is designed to protect human health, safety and security and the environment. At the same time it will put the nuclear industry on an equal footing with other industrial and power generation sectors and clarify that owners or those who manage and control have liability for site remediation.

Points of Order

I reiterate that the bill is not a measure to provide favourable treatment to the nuclear industry. It does not contain any hidden agenda. It demonstrates the government's commitment to implement its policy strategy to achieve smart regulation, as outlined in the Speech from the Throne. The bill will help "achieve the public good" and at the same time enhance "the climate for investment and trust in markets". I would ask the hon. members to join me in voting to send this bill to committee.

Mr. Gurmant Grewal (Surrey Central, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise on behalf of the constituents of Surrey Central to participate in the debate on Bill C-4, an act to amend the Nuclear Safety and Control Act. I listened to the speech by the minister with interest and I have a few observations which I will share with the House.

We all know that Canadians are very sensitive when it comes to the nuclear industry. They have the right to be and they should be. As elected representatives of the people it is our foremost duty to protect Canadians and assure their safety. It is also our moral responsibility to keep our environment as clean and pollution free as we can.

The purpose of the bill is to amend "the Nuclear Safety and Control Act to vary the classes of persons that the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission may order to take measures to reduce the levels of contamination of a place". The bill corrects a clause in the Nuclear Safety and Control Act preventing debt financing in the nuclear power sector, which could result in the government getting involved in financing the nuclear power sector.

Subsection 46(3) of the Nuclear Safety and Control Act is replaced by the following:

Where, after conducting a hearing, the Commission is satisfied that there is contamination referred to in subsection (1), the Commission may, in addition to filing a notice under subsection (2), order that the owner or occupant of, or any other person who has the management and control of, the affected land or place take the prescribed measures to reduce the level of contamination.

Lenders, banks and other financial institutions are refusing to consider approval of investment in the nuclear power sector due to a clause in the current Nuclear Safety and Control Act that would make the lenders liable in a case of a nuclear spill or accident or any other consequences thereof. This clause is not contained in other Canadian environmental legislation. Subsection 46(3) makes anyone with "an interest" in contaminated land or facilities liable for environmental remediation, and mortgage lenders and persons advancing funds and taking security on land are deemed as persons with an interest. I was a director of a credit union at one time. I remember the environmental assessment requirements imposed at that time and the onus on the financial institutions. It caused a furor in the industry at that time. We know how the lenders feel when they have to deal with that kind of liability.

I have a few examples of how the industry is already suffering because of this. Atomic Energy of Canada Ltd. has indicated that it is ready to explore the possibility of buying the reactors to ensure that the refurbishment is conducted. AECL is looking for private sector backers to help pay for the project because it would prove that refurbishing CANDU reactors in Canada and around the world is feasible. So on the one hand there is research and development and

high technology, and on the other hand it is a funding problem for the nuclear industry.

Here is another example. British Energy plc Bruce Power, which currently owns the lease to operate Ontario's Bruce nuclear power plant, has no clean and tidy answers about its ability to post a \$222 million guarantee to comply with its licence to operate an Ontario nuclear power plant. Bruce Power wants Canada's nuclear power plant regulator to consider alternatives to a requirement that the venture have enough cash on hand to operate for six months in case it has to shut down reactors and pay for any disaster cleanup.

• (1030)

The venture is looking into getting insurance against shutdowns, obtaining a credit rating and credit facilities, or changing its ownership structure. As we know, British Energy owns about 82% of the venture, Saskatoon-based Cameco Corporation, the world's largest uranium miner, owns 15%, and workers' unions own the rest of the power plant.

It is very difficult for the industry because of this particular restriction to arrange any financing or sponsoring of those projects. Canadian law generally limits lender liability to those with charge, management or control of secure assets, and investors recognize this standard form of liability and factor it into their agreements. Due to the unusual level of liability commanded by subsection 46(3), investors in the nuclear power sector are refusing to provide debt financing. That is a serious challenge and difficulty. Large scale projects—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): The hon. Leader of the Government in the House of Commons.

* * *

POINTS OF ORDER**PUBLIC WORKS AND GOVERNMENT SERVICES**

Hon. Don Boudria (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. First, I apologize to the hon. member, but as promised I said I would come back to the House and report on an issue that was asked for earlier, which I am now doing with the permission of the Chair.

The document in question is apparently an internal report of the quick response team of Public Works and Government Services Canada. This is not a statutory report or anything like that. Nevertheless, I did speak with the Minister of Public Works and Government Services and he told me he would be pleased to table the document in the House later this day at approximately noon. They are still working on completing some translation elements and so on, and of course these imperfections have to be corrected prior to any tabling, which is the rule if it is tabled in the House of Commons. To the best of his knowledge, it should be ready at or approximately at noon, at which time he will come to the House himself.

• (1035)

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): I think that this ends the debate on the tabling of documents.

Government Orders

[English]

NUCLEAR SAFETY AND CONTROL ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-4, an act to amend the Nuclear Safety and Control Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Gurmant Grewal (Surrey Central, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, before the interruption I was talking about the financing of the nuclear industry in Canada.

Large scale projects which sustain Canada's nuclear power industry cannot proceed without appropriate private sector debt financing, effectively discouraging domestic and foreign investment and the viability of future projects.

This amendment would limit liability to owners, occupants and persons with management or control of contaminated land, making the section consistent with Canadian environmental law.

The Canadian Alliance supports the removal of government funding of the nuclear sector. Without this amendment, the only investor qualified to invest would be the government, thereby possibly leaving Canadians liable for anything that happens in the industry.

A constraint on private sector financing in the nuclear industry remains a serious concern of the Canadian Nuclear Association. Subsection 46.3 of the Nuclear Safety and Control Act is considered a barrier to raising capital. The industry also recommends amending the Nuclear Liability Act, which the government has not looked into yet. The Canadian Nuclear Association contends that the government should do something about the Nuclear Liability Act as well, but it has ignored dealing with that.

Also, the association contends that issue of the third party cross-border liability has to be addressed. That has not been addressed yet.

We need to ensure private funding is available for the nuclear energy sector to remove involvement of government, thereby removing liability from ordinary Canadians.

This legislation could put the nuclear industry, which deals with this most serious and dangerous stuff, on par with other industries in providing overall safety for Canadians, which has not been a priority for the government for so many years.

Demand for products of the nuclear industry continues to grow worldwide. Products include electricity and nuclear medicines and therapies, for example, radioisotopes, et cetera. Fifteen to twenty million medical imaging and therapeutic procedures are performed each year in Canada.

We have perhaps 22 nuclear power plants active in Canada. We have sold Candu reactors to other nations around the world. Some of them have built nuclear bombs based on our reactor's technology.

Candus have the lowest marginal operating costs of western reactor design, that is, three cents per kilowatt hour. Approximately 13% of all electricity in Canada is generated by nuclear sources and is soon expected to be 20% after the restarting of six more reactors. It is estimated that the market value of that is more than \$3 billion.

We are talking about an industry which has a brighter future and which has a huge dollar value attached to it. Many jobs may be created in this industry in the future. We have the potential to earn more and probably enhance trade with other nations. This is an important industry we are talking about.

Nuclear power reduces greenhouse gas and smog emissions, unlike coal. It may be debated; some people may say yes and others may say no, but the argument stands on both sides. Generally it is considered that nuclear power plants can be environmentally friendly. Nuclear power plants are considered among the most secure and robust industrial facilities and contribute to energy security.

Energy will be a main issue in this century. We need to prepare for that and encourage the industry to do proper research and development, ensure safety and enhance its output.

Although public acceptance remains a challenge to new nuclear power plants, for example, the new version of the Candu ACR, progress needs to be continually made on matters relating to nuclear fuel waste management.

● (1040)

The issue of terrorism may also be on the public's mind. Another issue is how to treat nuclear, radioactive and other hazardous wastes.

It would not be fair to treat the nuclear waste issue as only a domestic one. When I was a member of the foreign affairs committee a few years ago we studied nuclear proliferation. I heard many harrowing tales of how nuclear material was stolen in many of the former Soviet republics and exported by criminal elements around the world.

There were 73 different incidents of the smuggling of nuclear materials that were caught between 1993 and 1996. That is just in those three years. I will give some examples.

The Romanian police had in their possession 82 kilograms of radioactive material, which is enriched uranium. In another incident, Lithuanian officials seized 100 kilograms of uranium 238. In another incident, the Belarus committee for state security seized five kilograms of cesium 133, a highly radioactive material. The German parliament discussed how three smugglers offered it 11 kilograms of Russian weapons grade plutonium. Similarly, Greenpeace was offered 800 kilograms of scarred warheads for public display in Berlin. The list goes on.

We also know that nuclear material and technology is transferred from certain rogue states to countries around the globe that have nuclear ambitions. Both Iran and North Korea are examples of countries that are believed to have transferred nuclear technology and materials to the highest bidder. We all have heard about Iraq and its ambitions of securing nuclear warheads.

Government Orders

If Canada is not to become the weak link in nuclear proliferation, Canada's waste management organizations will need to examine security procedures, storage and disposal, et cetera, particularly when we are fighting a war against terrorism. Obviously the issue of security and the storage of nuclear material or waste is not just a Canadian issue. It is an international issue.

I want to give an example from my constituency of Surrey Central regarding the storage of radioactive material. We must ensure that the waste management organizations act responsibly in the storage and disposal of nuclear waste, including the federal Liberal government.

For over two and one-half decades my constituents have been exposed to radioactive and toxic materials in the heart of the community of Newton in Surrey which at one time was the fastest growing city in Canada. In June 1972 a firm in Surrey was licensed by the federal government to import niobium, which is an ore that contains radioactive thorium.

The imported ore was used in smelting operations. Tonnes of hazardous waste were ignored and left unattended in the open for four years, until 1976. It was 1984 before the federal government accepted responsibility for it. The federal government issued the licence. The material was imported and processed. The waste was left unattended in the open air.

No one was ready to accept any responsibility. The provincial government said that it was not the province's responsibility because the federal government had issued the licence. The material was on the property of the municipal government, but it could not do anything about it. Finally, after eight years the responsibility was assumed by the federal government in 1984.

What happened next? People in that area said that small children played on the radioactive material. People confirmed reports that some cows from a nearby dairy farm died because they were grazing in that area. The feds forgot about it and did not take any action until October 1989. For three years after assuming responsibility the federal government did not do anything.

• (1045)

In October 1989 a special task force was appointed on a voluntary basis. Imagine. The government knew about such a serious issue for a long time and it dealt with it by appointing a task force on a voluntary basis to deal with the storage, handling and disposal of that hazardous material, unprotected piles of smelter slag and contaminated soil lying in a corner at 7800 Anvil Way in Newton.

There are barrels of concentrated radioactive material rusting in CN Rail's Thornton yard and at other locations in North Surrey. I went there and took pictures. I saw the iron barrels in which the concentrated radioactive material was stored. It had been stored for so many years that the barrels were rusting and the material was leaking. The slag which was left in the open remained there for a number of years. The material was also used as a filling when a building was constructed on that site.

The federal government appointed on a voluntary basis an organization comprised of only two people to look after this radioactive material. The Surrey Siting Task Force consulted with the local, provincial and federal governments. The material was

stored in a concrete bunker for 25 years, a quarter of a century. This was called temporary storage. My constituents were appalled when they listened to this story; radioactive material left in the open, then neglected and ignored and then handed over to a volunteer organization which stored it for 25 years in a concrete bunker in that area.

The federal voluntary task force could not find a permanent solution to the problem. Communities it contacted, including remote and abandoned uranium mines, refused to accept the material. Even the abandoned uranium mines refused to accept the material because the communities around them would not accept it. It is a crime to have kept that hazardous material in the heart of the country's fastest growing city, Surrey.

As a member of the foreign affairs committee then dealing with nuclear proliferation, I found out about this neglected storage site. After some research and consultation, I lobbied for three years and personally followed up with the Minister of Natural Resources and became involved in this issue until that 4,000 tonnes of dangerous material was finally removed from Surrey. After my efforts the material was finally removed from Surrey. Some of it went to Chalk River, Ontario while more was dumped in Arlington, Washington in the United States of America.

As I mentioned, a building had been built on the slag and the land slag was excavated under the building. The whole operation was very expensive to the taxpayers. I am talking about the monetary aspect, but no one is talking about the health issue. The federal government has kept this a secret. I am happy that my pressure finally had results. The former Minister of Natural Resources was helpful in dealing with the issue, and I thank him for that. Finally action was taken.

The longer the delay, the higher the cost, and the more potential for harm and danger to the community. I knocked on doors in that area to find out what people thought, but many did not even know about it. People did not know about it until the issue was raised in Parliament as well as in the community. The federal government made no effort to educate the community or to protect the communities around that material. This is a shameful story, highlighting carelessness and neglect by the federal government in dealing with hazardous and radioactive waste in Surrey.

On behalf of the people of Surrey Central, I pay very close attention to see that the travesty that occurred in my riding does not happen anywhere else in Canada.

Another example in British Columbia is the 8,600 tonnes of dioxin laced hazardous toxic material which was scheduled to be moved into British Columbia from Oregon in the United States. Those examples show that the government does not care how radioactive hazardous material is stored or that it is moving into Canada.

Government Orders

• (1050)

I asked the Minister of Natural Resources a question about this situation of during question period. The minister happens to be the political minister for British Columbia and is supposed to care about British Columbia's concerns, not ignore them. How can he afford to accept radioactive hazardous materials into the province from somewhere else? The environment minister was the former political minister for the province. How can the Minister of Natural Resources and the Minister of the Environment, both from British Columbia, let hazardous materials be stored in their province?

I asked the minister why hazardous material, which is too toxic for the people of Oregon, would be safe in British Columbia. It is important that nuclear waste, which is a lot of radioactive material or hazardous waste, is taken care of properly and stored in a way that is efficient, cost effective and safe to people in the communities.

In exciting news a constituent of mine, Mr. Bill Carnegie of Cloverdale, has informed me of a breakthrough technology that a firm he is associated with in Surrey has invented. All over the world scientists have been working for many years to find a process or means to destroy radioactivity or to treat the radioactive material so that its radioactivity is nullified. No one could find it. Even Einstein's theory indicates that it cannot be done, but this firm has done it. Last night in Stockholm, Sweden, they conducted tests. In those tests they established that they could reduce 10,000 units of radium to 80 units of radioactivity in that material.

It is very interesting that technological breakthroughs will take place when these firms are assisted both financially and otherwise to do their research and development. However this firm did it without the government's help. Dr. Roberto Monti of Monti America Corporation has invented this method of processing materials to render them non-radioactive. This Monti process, as he calls it, has been tested recently with very good results in other places as well.

I was so delighted to hear that this scientist and this group was invited to the White House a couple of months ago because of this breakthrough invention, but in Canada people do not even know about it. I have not read about it in any newspaper. I have not heard anyone from the government congratulating this firm for this breakthrough invention or discovery. On behalf of my constituents and the members on this side of the House, I congratulate this organization for the research it has done to make the world a safer place, to destroy the radioactivity and hazardous outcome from the radioactive material.

The debate seems to be more about the philosophy of private sector versus public sector ownership of industry and how that affects people. To suggest that it is no different than the bank that holds a mortgage on my house and that I would be responsible should I contaminate that house or property is simply is not true, particularly if I do not go bankrupt.

Subsection 46(3) of the Nuclear Safety and Control Act prevents owners and operators of Canadian nuclear facilities from obtaining debt financing. It represents a significant barrier to any form of domestic and foreign investment in the nuclear industry in Canada. It puts the Canadian nuclear industry at a substantial disadvantage

internationally. I wonder what the government has been doing and where it has been. Why has it let this thing happen for so long?

Subsection 46(3) of the Nuclear Safety and Control Act goes far beyond the common law principle of liability and the provisions of provincial and federal legislation. The subsection means that there is unlimited liability for the cleanup of environmental contamination for anyone with a legal right to or interest in the contaminated land or facilities. This includes mortgage lenders and other security holders.

• (1055)

The provision is unique to the nuclear industry. It does not appear in any other federal or provincial environmental legislation. Subsection 46(3) goes so far as to make passive investors or shareholders and lenders liable for the cost of cleanup in case an accident or anything else happens. As a result the nuclear industry has difficulties in arranging financing since the bringing into force of the Nuclear Safety and Control Act just two years ago. In all other such environmental legislation, lenders and other security holders are not exposed to such levels of liability unless they exercise their security and assume management and control of secured assets.

The individuals who drafted the original legislation could not foresee this complication in the form of the current act. It is appalling. The problems inherent in the legislation are obvious. The justification argument may be to protect abandoned sites. That is when companies operating facilities, usually mining, have gone bankrupt and walked away from remediation, thus leaving the federal and provincial governments with the cleanup responsibilities.

It is hard to understand why the government would hamstring the nuclear industry with this provision. Sometimes the most obvious problems escape the notice of the Liberal government until the problem becomes so significant it is finally forced into action. This is the situation here.

We know Bill C-57 was introduced in the last session. The bill attempted to make these changes which I am debating today. However it died on the order paper, so we have to start the whole process again.

The Canadian Alliance supports private sector involvement in the financing of the nuclear industry to keep government involvement and public funding of such projects to a minimum. I have long had a problem with the conflict situation in which the Canadian government is both the sales agency for Canada's nuclear technology, such as the Candu reactor, and is the sole regulator of the nuclear industry and nuclear research in the country. This industry has the government's involvement in both. The government is proactive in selling Candu reactors and is proactive in regulating the industry at the same time. I see some conflict of interest there.

The situation makes us vulnerable to compromise in the safety and regulatory body in favour of the commercial side of the industry. We all know that when Candu reactors were sold to China, that was financed by the Export Development Corporation and the environmental requirements were waived. Why? Because the government was regulating at the same time that it was selling the technology so the environmental implications of the requirement were just waived in favour of government. That was wrong.

The Canadian Alliance also supports reducing barriers that impede private sector competitiveness at a time when all forms of cleaner fuel must be considered. If the nuclear industry is to be part of the energy mix of the country for a longer period of time to come, it is imperative that it is kept on the same playing field as other energy industries in Canada. We cannot be discriminatory from one industry to the other. If industries are competing in the open market, they must be treated fairly and on an equitable basis. Conditions must be competitive when industries are competing.

Like many other energy industries, the nuclear industry requires a huge amount of funding to remain viable, but so far this restriction does not give the opportunity to the industry to have access to the same funding as their competitors. The role of nuclear industry may be debated, but the nuclear industry should be allowed to attract investors to further allow the future development of the industry on both the domestic and international fronts. It must be able to make accurate long term plans to remain stable and attract private sector investment. Continuing uncertainty regarding the availability of financing could jeopardize not only the substantial economic benefits of such investment for Canadian nuclear manufacturers, but also the jobs of thousands of Canadian workers who work in the industry.

• (1100)

Therefore, the amendment is critical to the revitalization of the Ontario electrical industry as well as in New Brunswick and other places.

In conclusion, Canadians are very sensitive when it comes to the nuclear industry. The safety, health and benefit of Canadians are of utmost importance. The government must be embarrassed, and Canadians will notice yet another Liberal attempt to cover up misguided incompetence in drafting the act. Canadians deserve better.

I talked about the regulations. Let me stress that 80% of the component of law in Canada is by way of regulations, while about 20% of the law by way of legislation. All members in both Houses passionately debate legislation but the regulatory component is not a part of that debate in the House. We have been lobbying for democratic reforms for so long, reforms such as free votes, work in the committees, the way private members' business is treated and so on. Parliamentary reform becomes very important. In parliamentary reform, regulatory reform is an integral component.

The Standing Joint Committee on Scrutiny of Regulations, of which I happen to be co-chair, has been demanding that it be able to scrutinize regulations and then table a report in the House that could disallow those regulations. However, surprisingly the disallowance procedures for regulations are not on a statutory footing. If the

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minister chooses not to accept the report and not to disallow those regulations, the committee has no other powers to deal with it.

I introduced a private member's bill in the last session of the House, which I reintroduced in this session, to at least put the disallowance procedure on a statutory footing in the House so that the scrutiny by the security of regulations committee becomes somewhat meaningful. At least a committee of the House would have full authority to scrutinize regulations of statutory instruments that are not a part of the debate in this House.

I wish the government would always table the draft regulations along with the legislation so that debate can take place in the House. Then those draft regulations could be referred to the committee for public input and some debate. Then regulatory reform becomes an integral part of parliamentary and democratic reform. I am sorry that I have to point out that the federal Liberal government is light years behind other jurisdictions, including provinces such as Ontario, British Columbia, Alberta and Nova Scotia which have had regulatory reform. They have moved from red tape to smart tape and from smart tape to smart government.

Regulations are not a bad thing but they cost businesses and Canadians. It has been estimated that \$103 billion per year is the comprised cost of regulations in Canada. When we talk about federal regulations, provincial regulations and municipal regulations, there is a dire need to harmonize regulations among those different jurisdictions.

There is lots of overlapping. I know of one example. Different departments of government have different regulations. Sometimes they contradict each other. There are four different regulations which monitor one particular industry. Business people have to choose which regulation they should comply with because the four contradict one another. They are overlapping.

• (1105)

I was surprised at what they do. They pick that regulation where the penalties are the highest so they can comply with it and minimize their costs and they ignore the other three regulations, even if the fines are small. What can they do?

As we talk about regulations, I urge the government to move ahead with regulatory reform for smart regulations that can regulate the industry but not be a barrier for business, innovation, research and development or investment. All these things are in a vicious cycle. They affect our productivity and our standard of living. I was amazed to find that the compliance costs for regulations come to something like \$13,700 per household, which is a cost second only to that of shelter. But this is a hidden tax. The hidden taxes are not talked about much because they are hidden.

As we are talking about regulatory reform, I think this is a time that the government needs to accept the proposal by the official opposition, the Canadian Alliance. We have always shown them their dark corners with a flashlight. The government has sometimes stolen our policies, but this policy of democratic reform is one that I want it to steal so Canadians can enjoy democracy.

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With regard to our topic, the funding or financing of the nuclear industry, in an effort to rectify the deficiencies in the existing regulatory regime we went through a process two or three years ago of restructuring the Canadian nuclear safety and control bureaucracy. Bill C-57 was an amendment to the Nuclear Safety and Control Act that would have fixed the problem with subsection 46(3) of the current act, a problem that should have been recognized by the drafters of the bill at that time. With these comments, I will conclude. Different industries should be put on an equal footing when they are competing in the market. This section should have been, at least now, corrected so that the industry has access to financing by bankers and lenders.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Serge Cardin (Sherbrooke, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Bill C-57, An Act to amend the Nuclear Safety and Control Act, is now back as Bill C-4. It had been introduced at first reading on Friday, May 31, 2002. It went to second reading the following Tuesday, June 4, 2001. I think we all agree that this was fast.

It now is one of the first ones to come back, which shows the government's eagerness to give in to the demands of the nuclear lobby.

Of course, it is not a very large bill. It even seems quite simple. However, if we take a closer look at it, some fundamental issues emerge. The bill is only five lines long. It contains only one short paragraph. Subsection 46(3) of the old act said:

Where, after conducting a hearing, the Commission is satisfied that there is contamination referred to in subsection (1), the Commission may, in addition to filing a notice under subsection (2), order that the owner or occupant of, or any other person with a right to or interest in, the affected land or place take the prescribed measures to reduce the level of contamination.

In the French version, the word "responsible" is being replaced by the word "occupant", and in both versions the words "with a right to or interest in" are being replaced by the words "who has the management and control of".

In the French version, the terms "En outre, elle peut" refer to the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission. As can be seen, subsection 46(3) is amended as follows:

(3) Where, after conducting a hearing, the Commission is satisfied that there is contamination referred to in subsection (1), the Commission may, in addition to filing a notice under subsection (2), order that the owner or occupant of, or any other person who has the management and control of, the affected land or place take the prescribed measures to reduce the level of contamination.

We can all agree: this is quite simple. However, the government tells us that it is simply correcting an irregularity and that we should move on to other things as quickly as possible. That is the government's wish. However, it is a bit brief.

When we say it is a bit brief, it reminds me a bit of Cyrano de Bergerac, whom I will paraphrase if you will indulge me. We could say the following: "Oh no, young man, that is a bit brief. One could convey much to the gods just by varying one's tone of voice. There is curious: But what does this apparently inoffensive simplicity conceal? Timorous: There are therefore risks if financiers do not wish to commit themselves. Cavalier: Ah, that is a private matter. We should not concern ourselves with it. Interrogative: Can we do without nuclear energy? Affirmative: Nuclear energy is not a

greenhouse gas solution. Provident and considerate: Invest in renewable energy; it will be to your advantage.

The arguments of the minister and the sponsor to justify this amendment are clumsy to say the least. They claim that it is merely a very minor technical correction to correct a mistake that was made when the legislation was passed in 1997. According to them, Hansard makes no mention of a discussion on this paragraph and they also claim that the legislator did not intend to make it so difficult to finance nuclear generating stations. These claims distort the reality, or dare I say, the truth.

In a message written to the government, Brian Armstrong, Bruce Power's general counsel and corporate secretary, describes the points that the government should take into consideration, and I quote:

Generally, the legislation has a negative impact on the capacity of private corporations to invest in nuclear plants, and this is detrimental to the future development of the Canadian nuclear industry.

• (1110)

This is all that was needed to launch the debate. There are two specific things in this statement, namely the privatization of nuclear plants and, more importantly, the anticipated development of that industry. I am convinced that this small clause in the bill did not go unnoticed.

In 1997, no one had stated any intention of privatizing nuclear plants. All the funding was provided by the provinces or by their crown corporations through the issuance of government backed bonds, and not through mortgages on nuclear plants. Therefore, it is no coincidence that the legislator acted the way it did. It acted in compliance with the strict rules that have always governed the nuclear industry.

Moreover, the whole argument overlooks the major negative developments in the nuclear industry since 1997, both in Canada and around the world. It is as if they wanted the House to begin this debate with a 1997 vision, that is without taking into account the evolution of the situation in recent years.

On the contrary, I think we are justified in addressing the issue in a 2002 context. We must put into perspective the changes that have occurred in that industry since 1997, and we must see if it is in the public interest to now promote not only the privatization of nuclear plants by eliminating these constraints, but also, as I said, the development of the nuclear industry.

Before briefly reviewing the major events which have occurred since 1997 and which serve as arguments against the nuclear development which the Ontario privatization effort is attempting to achieve, and before showing the increased environmental and safety risks which would result from this amendment, it is appropriate to examine the government's main arguments and to comment on them.

The government tells us that the nuclear industry is at a disadvantage, compared to other forms of energy. It is perfectly normal to treat the nuclear industry differently, since the scope of contamination following a nuclear plant incident is tremendous, both in terms of its geographical impact and the duration of its effects.

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The explosion at Chernobyl contaminated the land all the way to the south of France and numerous cancers relating to this accident still surface every day and will continue to do so for decades to come. Therefore, it is normal to be much more demanding with the nuclear industry.

The government also tells us that this puts Canadian industries at a disadvantage compared to their international competitors. What industries? Nuclear power plant construction is totally under the control of the federal government, Atomic Energy of Canada being the sole Canadian supplier. As for the operation of these plants, it has been under the control of the provinces so far, and this standard also applies to a foreign private operator wanting to invest in a plant here. That foreign operator is treated the same way as any local private operator. The government also says that this was an exceptional measure.

• (1115)

When dealing with an industry that produces extremely hazardous waste that will remain hazardous for thousands of years, including plutonium and some other components which can be used and have been used to build mass destruction nuclear weapons and for which there exists no solution that would be safe in the long term, it is absolutely normal that such an industry be subjected to stricter rules than those that apply to an oil well or a hydroelectric dam.

The government also tells us that the general powers of the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission are sufficient. In view of the commission's lack of independence, it is preferable to keep this specific power rather than rely solely on the regulatory power provided under section 24 of the act.

I should point out that this commission did not exist in 1997. Until 2000, it was the former Atomic Energy Control Board. As was the case with members of the old board, members of this commission are appointed by the government, which also owns Atomic Energy of Canada and has an obvious business interest in the development of the nuclear industry.

This explains why it has never refused or withdrawn a nuclear generating station licence, despite the many dangerous incidents that occur on a regular basis. It took a report from American consultants, in 1998, to convince Ontario to close half of its reactors, which had become too dangerous after just some twenty years in operation.

Let us look at the important events that have occurred in the nuclear industry since 1997. I say 1997 because that is the year the Nuclear Safety and Control Act was reworked and amended. Subsection 46(3), which the bill seeks to amend, dates back to that time. However, we must look at what has been happening in the meantime to determine if it is still appropriate to privatize and expand the nuclear industry.

First, in 1998 Ontario had to shut down half of its reactors, resulting in a \$10 billion loss for Ontario Hydro, which now had a negative net worth and had to restructure. The utility was divided into three, leaving behind a huge debt for taxpayers.

The shutdown was due to the premature aging of the equipment and the inability of the staff to manage an environment that had become difficult and dangerous.

In Canada, we also had the publication of the Seaborn report. Here, as everywhere else in the western world, the commission found, after a ten-year study, that the proposed solution to bury spent fuel was strongly opposed by the general public and that there was no other long-term solution.

To avoid having to shut down plants whose cooling pools were full to capacity, the number of temporary on-site dry storage facilities was therefore increased.

Moreover, no new plant has been built in Canada over the past 20 years, none is planned for the next several decades and none of the plants shut down in 1998 has yet been able to re-open.

The only plant in New Brunswick, which is now 20 years old, is showing signs of premature aging, and over the past 24 months it has had to be shut down on several occasions for prolonged periods of time. According to an ongoing preliminary study, it would take over \$850 million to extend its life past 2006, if it lasts that long, which is doubtful.

In Quebec, an identical plant, Gentilly-2, will be 20 years old next year, and the recent increase in the number of reportable problems seems to indicate that it too will have to be shut down earlier than planned.

• (1120)

When it is possible to obtain 800 megawatts for \$500 million by constructing a new natural gas fired plant, which is not excessively polluting—I am not promoting natural gas, but speaking against nuclear generating stations—it would be surprising to see \$850 million invested in renovating, without any guarantee, an old 675 megawatt nuclear reactor generating 2.3 tonnes of irradiated fuel weekly, without any long term solutions for disposal of that spent fuel.

What is more, as far as events in Canada are concerned, the bad reputation of this industry has put young people off, and as a result, nuclear plants are having difficulty finding replacements for their highly skilled staff.

In the meantime, between 1997 and the present, certain events have taken place in other countries. Most of the countries of western Europe that use nuclear power, with the exception of France, have decided to end the experiment, particularly because of the lack of solutions for disposing of spent fuel, with its 1% plutonium content. This is even the case for heavily nuclear-dependent states such as Belgium, which is 50% dependent, and Germany, which is 30% dependent.

Most of the pressure has come from the public, which refused to allow plutonium shipments to pass through their towns and villages on the way to or from MOX processing sites. They cannot be faulted for this, when we know that a single microgram of this substance can kill in a very short time, if inhaled.

There is one other point. Canada has been unsuccessful in all of its attempts to market Candu to other countries since the China contract. After a long process, Turkey has deferred for another 30 plus years its decision on the advisability of using atomic energy. As for Korea, having had a lot of problems with its Candu, it has decided not to use Canada to supply its needs in future.

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Atomic Energy of Canada therefore needs to convert to the service sector, since it does not have a single contract for new power plants. Even the completion of the long-suspended Rumanian plant, which has been on hold for years due to lack of funds, has not yet been approved, and private funding is no more easily obtained.

Still looking beyond our borders, moreover, an accident in 1999 in a Japanese reprocessing centre under construction shook up the entire world nuclear industry and forced it to re-examine its standards and risk assessments relating to this technology. This accident, following the Chernobyl disaster, was the catalyst for a number of countries going off nuclear power.

Even highly nuclear dependent Japan has re-examined its investments. As for France, it halted operations in its breeder reactor, since these were unjustified in a shrinking market context, which ought to lead in the medium term to reprocessing plants, and possibly the nuclear plants themselves, being closed down.

There is one final point in regard to the events in other countries. No new plants have been built in the United States since Three Mile Island, in 1979. The state of Nevada used its veto to stop the planned construction of the only disposal site for millions of tons of spent fuel in the United States. This site was supposed to be built in the Yucca Mountains, approximately 80 miles from Las Vegas. A vote was pushed through Congress in an attempt to go ahead with the project, which has already cost \$8 billion for technical studies alone.

A protracted legal battle can therefore be expected in order to prevent any new plants, which President Bush dearly wants, from reaching the drawing board before the end of his term. No one wants to invest in this technology as long as there is no long-term solution for disposing of the spent fuel. This fourth point is the second last one. I have one final point left.

The disappearance of the U.S.S.R., the rise in terrorism, and more recently, the conflict between India and Pakistan have highlighted the grave dangers of nuclear proliferation, both in terms of states capable of producing and launching arms of mass destruction, and small groups that are able to explode dirty bombs made up of conventional explosives and highly radioactive nuclear waste right in the middle of our cities.

• (1125)

Obviously, this was the situation that existed from 1997-2000, which leads us to wonder why the government has taken a position that favours the private sector and places even greater emphasis on the development of nuclear energy.

There are also environmental and safety risks with the nuclear industry. Ontario decided to hand over the ownership and management of a nuclear generating station that is currently closed, to a private company, to the qualified staff of a foreign company, in order to avoid having to make the major investments required before it could be re-opened, because staffing deficiencies were a determining factor in the forced closure of 1998.

In terms of environmental risks, obviously in the event of a major contamination that would bankrupt the local subsidiary, a mortgage lender that had the benefit of a guarantee from the foreign head office in addition to the mortgage guarantee, would exercise the former rather than seize the property, as many businesses often do,

which would make it liable for any damage to the environment. In such cases, the head office would cut loose its subsidiary and nobody would be take responsibility for the contaminated site.

There are also security risks. Again, it is clear that putting the private sector in charge of any part of the operation or decontamination of sites containing nuclear material increases the risk of nuclear proliferation through the infiltration of individuals working for terrorist states or cells.

That is why, since 1980, the United States has prohibited the private reprocessing of any nuclear matter within its jurisdiction to prevent even the smallest amount of plutonium from finding its way into the hands of individuals over whom it has absolutely no control.

Regarding plutonium, let me give a quick example to illustrate the situation to our listeners. The size of the piece of paper I just crumpled corresponds to the amount of plutonium that was used in the Hiroshima bombing.

The proposed change to subsection 46(3) will encourage the development of nuclear energy in Canada. Privatization will make it easier to reopen plants that were closed down in Ontario and will increase environmental and security risks.

Because it is contrary to Bloc Quebecois policy to promote the development of nuclear energy, because there is practically a global consensus about moving away from nuclear energy, and because the dangers of proliferation have been abundantly illustrated by recent events on the international scene, we must oppose this amendment, and take this opportunity to promote a broader debate on the relevance of privatization and indeed of this whole foray into nuclear energy.

One objective of the Bloc Quebecois is to initiate a debate in which I think people would be very keen to participate. I have been hearing comments about this debate, and will share a few. Someone said "I will not agree to having future generations foot our nuclear energy bill and pay for our squandering".

True, there is no such thing as "the rights of the human of the future". Even the rights of the child are not yet a fait accompli. This does not concern all the lobbies that care only about immediate profit, and do not care about what happens tomorrow, let alone in the distant future.

The nuclear waste issue has yet to be resolved. It will probably never be resolved at a reasonable cost. Meanwhile, the nuclear lobby has opted for site storage, or perhaps underground storage, leaving our children's children with the burden of managing it for centuries to come.

• (1130)

Other comments foster debate or show the need for debate.

Some people have said that the civilian nuclear industry, an offspring of the military nuclear industry, was established without debate. The public, the only beneficiary of this huge source of energy, was not consulted. A true debate was never held. Decisions were always imposed upon the public.

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Others have said that nuclear energy is not unavoidable and, most of all, should be thoroughly debated to evaluate its pros and cons; this debate is clearly needed in order to avoid an impasse.

Others also say that nuclear energy has beneficial as well as damaging effects and wonder whether we should consider only its benefits, namely power, and forget its damaging effects, hazards and waste.

We need to ask this critical question: should we, yes or no, drop nuclear energy? As matters now stand, the government has decided to go ahead by privatizing, thus indirectly acquiring the tools needed to develop the nuclear sector. Meanwhile, the fundamental question remains unanswered, and people were never consulted nor informed in a manner that would allow them to take a position on the issue.

I really hope that this short provision of five lines or so will bring about a true debate on the future of the nuclear industry as soon as possible.

Nuclear industry experts define the nuclear energy in three words: hazards, waste and costs. In short, this is what nuclear energy is about. How, then, can we honestly avoid the fundamental debate and promote the development of nuclear energy only because we are in favour of privatization? To my knowledge, there is no one in the private sector who will invest money if there are no profits to be made. And yet, development is often the only road to profits.

If we want to get into the debate, we have to consider hazards, waste and costs.

Let us talk about hazards. The protection of the public and of the environment against atomic radiation hazards generated by nuclear power plants is already a hazard linked with nuclear energy, as defined in dictionaries.

We know that a tremendous media campaign is being conducted to make the public feel guilty about being concerned. The underlying message is always "If you are worried about nuclear energy, it is because you are stupid and incompetent". It is urgent to stop making the public feel guilty. Its concerns are perfectly rational. In most forums—but that does not necessarily make it a societal debate—whether on the radio or elsewhere, people and scientists who believe in nuclear energy tend to put down those who have legitimate concerns.

The danger or hazard linked with nuclear energy comes from the very large amount of energy released by nuclear fission and the existence of a chain reaction, which create the risk of an uncontrollable exponential runaway. The radioactivity of the spent materials is released.

The threat posed by nuclear energy is related to several factors. It is often due to operating errors and material deficiencies. Indeed, in nuclear plants, many accidents are caused by operating errors, acts of sabotage, or equipment failure.

• (1135)

The more complex the technology, the more the human factor becomes a key factor. As I explained earlier, because of the bad reputation of nuclear energy, young people who would have the skills, the intelligence and the brain to work in this industry are

turning away from it in increasing numbers. The government says that this is yet another reason to privatize the nuclear industry and, perhaps, to hire human resources abroad.

Earlier, I briefly mentioned that it is also for reasons of competitiveness and profitability that the safety aspect is being eroded. It has been said that nuclear plants are getting old. We are told that the costs of renovating and upgrading them are huge. In a strictly private environment where profitability is the number one priority, we have every reason to voice serious concerns.

To ensure a competitive production cost per kilowatt-hour, the operating life of plants is being unduly extended, the downtime of reactors is, perhaps, imprudently reduced and there is also increasing reliance on middlemen. We know that nuclear plants were originally expected to have an average operating life of 25 years. Now, they are talking about extending it to 40 years or more. However, equipment failure is often age-related.

Disasters could very well happen. Who is responsible when disasters occur? The House will remember that, in 1957, the United States congress passed the Price-Anderson Act limiting the civil liability of nuclear operators in the event of a nuclear accident. Such a limit was considered a precedent in civil liability.

Members will also remember that on July 29, 16 European countries signed the Paris convention setting forth the strict liability and the exclusive liability, but also the limitation upon the liability in the event of a serious nuclear accident. Pursuant to the agreement, measures are taken to avoid any interference with the development of the production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. Limited liability would help the nuclear energy industry avoid major financial setbacks caused by a nuclear accident. Since exclusive liability applies only to the operator, it protects subcontractors and building companies against any hidden flaws in the construction of the facilities.

This is strikingly similar to the attempt by the government to exempt from reducing the level of contamination anyone who could be linked to such a risky but potentially very lucrative business, if no accident happens. Then, if something bad occurs, the financial security they provide, hence their liability, would be limited.

Later on, in France, the legislation passed on October 30, 1968 set out the terms and conditions of the Paris convention. It confirmed the exemptions to the general law of liability. Section 3, as amended in 1990, limits the compensation to be paid to the victims by the operator to 600 million francs and by the State to 2.5 billion francs. So, there is still a limitation upon the liability of private operators managing and operating nuclear plants. I do not agree with this approach.

• (1140)

Therefore there is a risk of major disasters. As my time is running out and the Chair is indicating to me that I have five minutes left, I will now talk about risk, waste and costs.

We already talked about risk. In terms of waste, last year Bill C-27 provided for large amounts of money to manage dangerous nuclear waste. It also provided for investments from every user. These were large amounts of money, but we do not know how far they will go. We are not even sure how long it will take.

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However, as I said earlier, the United States has spent \$8 billion in studies alone. Imagine what it means in terms of making storage secure or even ideally getting rid of and maybe completely eliminating waste. However, this does not seem possible.

So we are left with what I would call the terrible and catastrophic irresponsibility of our predecessors, who never really wondered how to manage waste, or even eliminate it, and what the impact would be. That is all I had to say about waste management.

With regard to costs, we know very well, for example, that federal subsidies to Atomic Energy Canada over the past 46 years amount in total to \$15.8 billion in 1998 dollars.

It should be noted that this \$15.8 billion subsidy is real money, and that it does not take into account the opportunity cost, that is what the subsidy would have been worth if the government had invested in less costly initiatives. At a rate of 15%, the opportunity cost of government subsidies to Atomic Energy Canada is \$2.2 billion. You see how much money has been sunk into this. We can foresee how much more will be sunk in the future.

The question could be asked during an extensive debate on the nuclear industry. We could ask ourselves the following question: Can we opt out of nuclear energy? The answer is relatively simple. Yes, we can. People will ask what we can turn to. Saying yes, we can opt out of nuclear energy is saying yes to something else.

What are the alternatives? Our renewable resources, of course. Human beings need sun, water and air. The whole earth needs wind to operate properly and renew its own energy. It is the same, in terms of energy, as what the earth needs to operate.

Renewable energy sources are constantly replenished. As I said earlier, these sources are the sun, the wind, water and the biomass. If we put all the money that was invested in nuclear power and related fields, all the money that is still owed, at today's value, and the money we will have to spend to manage nuclear waste and environmental problems, if we invested all that money in renewable energy, we would not even need to bother with Kyoto. The problem would be settled quite quickly.

Here in Quebec—we are not in Quebec, actually—

An hon. member: It is across the river.

Mr. Serge Cardin: It is not that far away. In Quebec, wind energy is being promoted more and more. To those who fear a loss of jobs and money if we give up on nuclear energy, I say that wind energy creates many more jobs, and we know for a fact that it does not produce any greenhouse gas.

I will conclude by saying no to clause 46(3). We need a comprehensive debate on the future of nuclear energy in Canada and Quebec.

•(1145)

[*English*]

Mr. Gerald Keddy (South Shore, PC): Mr. Speaker, it is interesting to rise on the debate of Bill C-4 today. I listened fairly closely to the hon. member for Sherbrooke. He raised a number of very important issues about furthering this debate and making it

broader. I encourage the hon. member to continue with that thought process because there is much more to be debated.

I agreed with the member on a number of issues, but quite frankly my Progressive Conservative colleagues and I disagree with him on a number of other issues. It was quite telling when he spoke about the future of nuclear energy. Although we are in agreement with how the government has ignored its responsibility to deal adequately with nuclear waste, certainly the future of nuclear energy will meet part of our energy commitments.

The hon. member for Sherbrooke quite rightly used Europe as an example. Although much of Europe is downsizing its nuclear sector, Germany has absolutely no compulsion about continuing to buy nuclear energy from France. With the German arrangement for getting rid of its reactors credits can be transferred between German reactors. Therefore Germany will continue to be a nuclear operator well into 2025 and 2030. In and of itself that does not set the case for nuclear energy, but it is part of the argument as it unfolds that should be laid out for people to discuss.

With the background of the bill there is a real sense of *déjà vu*, for my French colleagues. It seems to me that not long ago we were here debating this very bill. We had been lobbied by the banking institutions and the nuclear sector. At that time there was a great amount of urgency about this piece of legislation. It had to be passed within a certain timeframe.

There are a number of bills and I will mention just one of them: the Kimberley process for grading and marketing diamonds. That is another bill that has a great amount of urgency. We have to get it passed by December 31, 2002, because we have already signed a charter at the United Nations.

These two pieces of legislation are urgent. Both of them have a fair amount of importance. We need to get them passed. Yet the government prorogued the House. It said in the middle of September that the legislation was not important, that we did not have to come back here, that the nation's business could wait. It simply got rid of the legislation, the committees and the members who sit on the committees and said that it would set them all up again.

In the government's infinite wisdom I am sure there must have been a reason for that, but I do not know what it was. I am waiting to be enlightened. I expect that some time over the course of the next couple of weeks the government will enlighten us on the reason it prorogued the House. We had already debated this legislation in the House. It had already gone through committee. Why did it take this legislation and say "Forget it. It is not required. We do not have to worry about it. We will just start all over again"?

By the way, it now wants us to take the Kimberley process and fast track it. We are to forget about having a debate on it because it is not required. The government has a deadline so it will fast track it. If it cannot fast track it, it will just use its majority to force closure and get it passed. That is not democracy. Even the Liberals in their limited knowledge of how democracy works would understand that this is not democracy in any way, shape or form.

Government Orders

● (1150)

To speak directly to the bill, the government passed the Nuclear Safety and Control Act in 1997 but apparently, like all the rest of the legislation it has passed, it forgot to read the bill. Specifically it did not read the fine print.

We have subsection 46(3) of the act that was passed in 1997 by the government which has become problematic. When nuclear corporations asked for debt financing from the banks and the debt servicing people of the country they found that the banks did not want to provide it. When we read subsection 46(3) it is quite clear why they did not want to provide it. Subsection 46(3) reads:

(3) Where, after conducting a hearing, the Commission is satisfied that there is contamination referred to in subsection (1), the Commission may, in addition to filing a notice under subsection (2), order that the owner or occupant of, or any other person with a right to or interest in, the affected land or place take the prescribed measures to reduce the level of contamination.

Back in 1997 I do not think it was the intent of the government to put the responsibility for nuclear contamination cleanup on the backs of the financial institutions that would be supporting the said nuclear reactor or site. Certainly that is the way the banks looked at it. Under the old section of the act they had a liability that there was no reason they should assume.

I look at the debate about nuclear energy as a separate debate about the wording of this particularly sloppy piece of typical Liberal legislation. It is absolutely no surprise to me that we have to go back to fix legislation as we have done many times with many other pieces of legislation in the House that the Liberals had passed by forcing the issue, by preventing debate and by using their huge majority.

Today in Canada the CNSC licenses over 3,500 operations. The Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission is responsible for 3,500 operations in Canada. We are not just talking about nuclear reactors. There is a handful of nuclear reactors in the country but there are 3,500 nuclear operations. These operations use nuclear energy or materials. They include uranium refineries, nuclear power plants, hundreds of laboratories and most hospitals.

If we look at section 46 of the Nuclear Safety and Control Act as it is currently written, we realize that the liability for contamination at any site extends not just to the owners, occupants and managers of that site but to lenders such as banks and other financial organizations.

When we read that, and if even we are against the principle of nuclear energy, we must realize this piece of legislation affects a lot more operations than just nuclear power plants.

I do not think many members of the House want to start shutting down our laboratories and our hospitals because of a mistake in a piece of legislation that was forced through the House in 1997 by another majority Liberal government.

● (1155)

If we look at the substance of the bill to amend section 46 of the Nuclear Safety and Control Act, the amendment changes the wording of section 46 to eliminate the liability of lending institutions for remedial measures in instances of nuclear contamination. There is still a liability for the operators, managers and owners, as there

absolutely should be, but even in my wildest dreams I do not see an argument for liability on behalf of lending institutions.

I am not trying to say that somehow we should allow the big banks to run the country or not be applicable to the laws that govern the country, but in this case there is clearly no reason that it should apply to the financial institutions. Liability for any possible radioactive contamination would only apply to the owners, occupants and managers of the site that may be contaminated.

Under proposed section 46(3) that measure can be interpreted to extend beyond liability for nuclear site remediation as it is worded now. It should apply only to an owner, operator and manager of the site, not to the financial institution.

Hopefully it is not the job of government to stifle the nuclear sector or to prevent it from being a supplier of clean energy, which it is. We had unanimous consent in the House against Bill C-27 that was to deal with nuclear waste with which the government dealt in a very sloppy, ineffective, unorganized, unprincipled and totally arbitrary manner. All opposition parties in the House voted against Bill C-27.

To this very day the government has not dealt with the long term storage problems inherent in the nuclear energy sector. However, that does not mean we should not approve a small change in legislation that would allow nuclear operators, laboratories, hospitals and research facilities to access debt financing.

There are all kinds of reasons that I would tend to debate this issue. Did the government take its responsibility to the people of Canada seriously when it reintroduced the bill after it prorogued the House and threw out the proverbial baby with the bathwater? I do not think the government took its responsibility seriously at all.

We could have been back here in the middle of September and we could have been moving on a lot of legislation, not the least of which is the Kimberley Process. Now we are hearing at the natural resources committee that somehow we may not have time to deal with the Kimberley process because it is October 10 and we need to have this done by December 31. We have known about it for some time but we have not dealt with it, so we will just shut down the diamond industry if we do not get it ready.

Canadian mines are producing 6% of the world's gemstones. With the Ekati mine coming on line we are expected to produce 12% of the world's gemstones. It is a huge market, a wonderful industry, a great opportunity for northern Canada, and we have a helmsman who is asleep at the wheel. His first mate jumped ship and the rest of the sailors are ready to mutiny at any minute.

● (1200)

Now we will throw out all the legislation, never mind what is or is not important, and we will rework it all. It is not a question of the Progressive Conservative Party supporting the legislation, we will support it, but we do not support the arrogant, indecisive, totally unorganized approach the government has to everything.

Government Orders

If the government makes a mistake today, it will worry about it some day. Some day down the line it will get it fixed. It did something in 1997 but it did not have the competency to craft legislation that would actually last more than five years before it had to be fixed again here in the House. Somehow or another it muddles along throwing out legislation and then bringing it back. In the meantime the important issues facing the country are put on the back burner.

By the way, now we have another burning issue, the Kimberley process, which is a great process. Because it is a natural resources issue, we might have to send it to the trade committee where it can be dealt with in a timely manner. It is not the opposition's problem and it is not the fault of the opposition parties in the House that the government cannot figure out how to run this institution.

We have spoken to this subject a number of times and, unfortunately, we will be speaking to it again. It was the result of poorly crafted legislation that was introduced in 1997. We have a responsibility as parliamentarians to fix the legislation. I intend to vote in support of fixing that legislation but I will not vote in support of stifling debate.

Because the government made the decision to prorogue the House and because it does not understand the basics of governing the nation, we will debate this issue as long as anyone cares to debate it, whether it be members from the Bloc, from the NDP, from the Alliance or from the Progressive Conservative Party. We have a responsibility to Canadians to examine all parts and aspects of this legislation, which we already did.

However, since the government said that we would have another opportunity, I feel as an opposition member of Parliament that we will take that opportunity and look at the legislation until it goes through all the hurdles and the whole process, to the Senate, is approved and comes back to the House again. That is not the fast track. That is not the easy way out for a government that denied its responsibility, decided to look the other way and prorogue the House of Commons for no foreseeable and observable reason.

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● (1205)

POINTS OF ORDER

TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I hesitate to otherwise interrupt the other business of the House, but I wonder if I could seek unanimous consent to table two documents at this time. The first document is entitled "Quick Response Team Sponsorship File Review Final Project Report".

The second document is entitled "Actions To Date and On-Going", regarding the Government of Canada sponsorship program file review by Public Works and Government Services Canada.

I have copies of both documents in both official languages.

The Deputy Speaker: The House has heard the terms of the request. Does the House give its consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

[*Translation*]

NUCLEAR SAFETY AND CONTROL ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-4, An Act to amend the Nuclear Safety and Control Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Gilles-A. Perron (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the remarks made by my colleague from Sherbrooke and those made by my colleague from South Shore have prompted me to take part in this debate not only as a member of Parliament, but also as a new grandfather. Two months ago today, my granddaughter, Audrey, was born.

This morning, we are debating a bill that deals with the responsibilities of those who finance the production of radioactive materials. What I want to do this morning is to reflect on the fact that we are working with radioactive materials and to remind my colleagues of that. We all remember Chernobyl and Three Mile Island.

I think that we are putting the cart before the horse. Before starting to talk about the financing of nuclear generating stations, radioactive materials and radioactive waste, we should consider having a serious debate. That debate has never taken place. Should we use radioactive materials to generate power?

Considering the fact that the member for South Shore told us, at the end of his speech, that his party would support the government's position on this bill but that he had great difficulty understanding and accepting how this is done, should he not support us and agree that Bill C-4 should be scrapped and the door opened to a real debate on the use of radioactive materials?

● (1210)

[*English*]

Mr. Gerald Keddy: Mr. Speaker, before I make any comment or answer my colleague's question I want to congratulate him on becoming a grand-père. Hopefully the rest of us will get there at some stage in the process. One of the great privileges of standing in the House is that we do represent ourselves, our children and our children's children. The things we debate and discuss and the bills we pass should reflect that.

I would like my colleague to know that I am not forgetting Chernobyl, Three Mile Island or the dangers that are inherent in the nuclear sector. I am also not ignoring the very real fact that nuclear energy will continue to be part of our electricity supply in North America and indeed the world. In order to react to that fact we need to have, especially in Canada, legislation that reflects that.

Government Orders

There is another part of the legislation that is as problematic as how the legislation and the current clause 46(3) affect the lending institutions and the nuclear reactors. It also affects our research and development, our laboratories and our hospitals. Certainly no financial institution should be held responsible for nuclear waste or nuclear cleanup, if it is required, that it did not cause. I think that is the reason we would support the bill. However we also support open, full and complete debate on the legislation and intend to ensure that it is debated.

I appreciate my colleague's comments and the comments of the member for Sherbrooke who debated Bill C-27, the nuclear waste disposal act. We had unanimity among the opposition parties that it was a poorly crafted, poorly worded, typical, I might add, piece of Liberal legislation. Everyone in the House was against that legislation.

I separate this particular bill out differently. I think it affects the industry differently, and I certainly encourage and support debate on it, but at the end of the day we will support this particular clause.

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to be here to talk about such an important issue. Like my colleague I am concerned as well with the process this act to amend the Nuclear Safety and Control Act is taking.

I am reminded of what happened earlier this week with regard to softwood lumber. A situation developed where debate in the House on softwood lumber actually went back to 1996 in terms of the government not really planning, processing and getting the information out to the public. An announcement was finally issued at 2:30 in the afternoon out on the west coast, as far away from the members of the House as the announcement could be taken, concerning an important package affecting Canadian families and businesses that have been moving out of our communities. We were not able to debate the announcement in the House in the way that it should have been.

I would also add that during that particular day I asked for an emergency debate on softwood, believing that it would be important to talk about it as it developed and, more important, to at least have an opportunity to address the government's package in an intelligent manner. Sadly, the NDP was chastized for making public comments about the actual proposal the government was launching to the media. We had to rely on actual leaks to get the details to ask the important questions.

The act to amend the Nuclear Safety and Control Act is very important to the Canadian public. We are concerned about this process because it will not receive the full and proper debate that it should. As my colleague from the Bloc mentioned earlier, it is about a larger issue. It is about where we want to go as a country in terms of energy products, how we actually create them, what they do to our environment and, more important, how we go about planning a nation.

The bill would cause a number of different problems. In my opinion the liability and the environment are very important issues that would be weakened.

There have been incidents that have occurred in the world. We have witnessed Chernobyl and Three Mile Island. Hopefully these

events will never happen again but the reality is that when we use a product like nuclear power there will be risks and problems. We must be careful before we get into a process to expand those products, especially on an industry that is unique. The devastation in terms of an accident is one that is far reaching, not only in terms of immediate health problems but death, from an incident in the geographic area where the plant is located. This type of accident could affect the whole planet. The long lasting effects are certainly there.

We know that in Chernobyl many different problems have emerged with regard to the health of the citizens who are still suffering from an industry that did not have the proper planning and support.

I feel we are going in that direction. I do not feel that we are actually deciding to go on a course of action with regard to the environment and energy, as opposed to allowing this to happen because we are desperate for funds. We are desperate for funds for an industry that has been poorly planned in Canada. In Ontario we have had a couple of cases where we have seen the effects happen right away. I think the bill will weaken the industry.

I cannot understand the scope of the liability that will be narrowed. If the government is going to invest in a product and provide some resources to it and recoup some benefit, then it should stand by it. The government should be liable. This is done in many different business practises. Normally one does not basically get the opportunity to invest and then have that guaranteed.

Nuclear energy is a product that has a high degree of risk. It also comes with a great deal of potential for profits. We have seen the increase in energy use in our communities. Large sums of funds can be recouped from the industry and the household users.

I think that narrowing the scope of liability and allowing the banks to get away with this is not the way to go about deciding on the course of actions that we are going to take.

With regard to the process I want to note that this is not a housekeeping matter. This is truly about deciding where a nation wants to go with regard to an energy source. It is important for a country to stand for something.

● (1215)

From coast to coast to coast we should have certain things in common. With regard to energy, its use and how we are going to build a society and be able to compete with the world, I think energy products and use should happen that way. This should not be done in a piecemeal way. We have seen that specifically with Bruce Power. This is going to potentially address its shortage of cash in the meantime, but at the same time it opens up a whole Pandora's box with regard to privatization. That is a really big concern for me and for many other people in my constituency and, I believe, across this country.

Government Orders

I have seen privatization affect consumers quite profoundly. In Windsor, Ontario, we were one of the municipalities that had to deal with the deregulation passed on to us from the provincial government. Feeling the burden of the poor management and the poor regulations of that industry, it passed this down to the municipalities. It was really quite sad. The government told municipalities that they had a choice on deregulation, that they had to get themselves ready but they had the choice of two options. Municipalities could either sell their local utilities or run the utilities themselves. So at that point in time the municipalities had the choice to allow the private sector to take over.

That was a real problem in Windsor. We have been able to attract investment to our area. Windsor and Essex County contribute \$26 billion annually to the gross domestic product of Canada, which would make us the fifth largest contributor if we were actually a province, compared to the provincial figures. We have been able to track that by having a solid system, a public utility, decent prices and decent resources in order to be able to address and get that investment, such as the auto industry and the tourism industry through the casino. We have seen a whole development of agriculture in our community. Actually we have used other plants that are more renewable. We have actually been able to get into some more environmentally friendly energy products, but not to the degree we want to.

We have been able to use that stability to our advantage to create the environment to attract business and industry, but here is what has happened with the province moving toward privatization. We saw deregulation, and if we sell, then there we go, we allow it to go into the great unknown. On top of that, it was ironic that we had a kind of drop-dead date for the privatization, whereby the province would have taxed us a third on the asset. If we had decided to sell it, we actually would have paid back a third of the asset to the provincial government. It was another way for the province to be able to scrape its interest off the backs of the municipal ratepayers.

We looked at the process for privatization and decided as a municipal government that we could not do it. It was not to our advantage. It was not in the business interest or in the public interest. We decided to maintain it. What we had to do with that decision was prepare for deregulation. The provincial government gave us a whole kit in terms of things we would have to do for deregulation, but deregulation was not just about what it provided us with in terms of some minor direction. There were all the other things that started to evolve that the province never calculated for. We created boards. We had to get people ready on committees. We had to hire staff. We had to do a whole series of things for deregulation that cost our municipality around \$13 million to \$15 million to get it ready so the private sector could sell energy.

Here is the irony in all of this: The fact is that the Windsor taxpayers in that area had to pay for getting it ready for the private sector. It was shameful. It was absolutely shameful. They had to pay for it through higher rates and I can tell the House that there are many people on fixed incomes whom the government has not supported properly or enough for them to be able to pay for the rising costs of energy. There are persons with disabilities, seniors, and just other citizens in general who are working two or three jobs to be able to maintain employment and the standards and the quality

of life necessary for their families. They could not continue to absorb that, so we had to do it. We had to absorb all those energy costs. I believe that this amendment is going to increase that insidious movement toward privatization and its effects.

● (1220)

With regard to the banks and this bill, I do not think that they are necessarily going to be able to open up in terms of providing the resources. Although this will provide some type of flexibility for them, will it get them the cash cow? What if it does not? What do we do then? We are back to square one if they decide not to. If they do not come in for the rescue, if they do not ride in with the cash, so to speak, where do we go from there? We are back to square one. We have not addressed the problem and that is energy use in our community and how we want to go about it in the future.

The Nuclear Liability Act from 1976 has a clause for only \$75 million for those who would be responsible if there is an accident. That is not sufficient. I would like to see work done in this aspect. I would not want to see a narrowing scope of liability. I want to see it expanded. We do not want our children and future generations to have to deal with contaminated sites. We already have had a problem with that. We actually have had to introduce legislation for contaminated sites through brownfield projects. We have had to give tax relief and subsidies because poor decision making has allowed businesses to do the damage they have done to different environmental spots and different types of land in our communities. Again we have had to pick that up through taxpayers to clean it up. That is what will happen if we do not look at the greater expansion of the \$75 million. If we narrow that scope, it will just be passed on to somebody else. That is why we need to have an intelligent debate about where we want to go with this industry.

With regard to the environment and the environmental protection in the bill, Canada now falls far behind other industrial nations in the promotion and use of renewable energy sources. That is what my hon. colleague from the Bloc mentioned earlier. Where do we want to go with this industry and where do we want to go in terms of Canada? We must have a larger debate. Instead of trying to open up a process for an industry that certainly does not have a future in terms of the renewable aspects we would like to see, we are having to deal with all the byproducts of this industry.

I know for a fact that Canada is one of the biggest developers of the byproducts from nuclear waste. We have to deal with that. It is something that is an ongoing liability as opposed to renewable energy, which is an asset. Especially with Kyoto there is an opportunity for us to debate this issue, to look at the larger picture of renewable energy and to go forward. We have that opportunity with Kyoto. We have to address it. We cannot get into the whole aspect of putting it off. We cannot wait for somebody else to do it because we do not have the courage or the intestinal fortitude to move forward. We have to champion that. That will not happen with this type of growth industry. We know that nuclear power energy is not sustainable, not environmentally friendly, and it will not be the one that we want to create as the industry for Canadians.

Government Orders

We in the NDP think that the government should embrace the proposal put forward by the Canadian Wind Energy Association to achieve the goals of installing more than 10,000 megawatts of wind power capacity and providing 5% of our electricity from wind power by 2010. Other nations have moved forward on that. Many European nations have been able to break into this and have used this ingenuity to develop the capacities in their communities for innovation, for different employment as well and for export across the world.

It is interesting, too, because we right now we are going through a whole innovation strategy. The minister of trade has been pushing forward an innovation strategy. We have had a summit and we have talked about these things, about where we are going with the use of the automobile, for example, with the use of power, and with regard to creating the intellectual capacity to be able to create products and services that will serve us well into the future, make us a competitor and make us a champion for the world with regard to innovation. Energy is one of those things.

This bill would bring us back to point of the same old, same old, to prop up a bad idea and make it worse. That is wrong. The government has the innovation strategy going on, so it has some tools and some initiatives available to it. I give it credit for at least trying. I do not think that it has done enough with them. The government has not put in the resources. It has not committed to that because it does not have the complete political will to push far enough just yet, but at least, and I give it credit, the government has started something. There is a spark there, potentially, but it takes more than just going around and talking to people and not doing anything. The government gets reports, puts them on the shelf and does not do anything with them.

After being in those meetings, I can tell members that people did talk about renewable energy, about wind power for one thing. It is something that will certainly be able to provide us with some target emissions for Kyoto. I believe that it will be able to provide us with ingenuity and as well it will provide us with a safer environment.

● (1225)

I want to touch on what I think the bill means to Canadian citizens, the final users. I also want to reinforce my concerns about what will happen to the actual users and the prices afterwards. The bill will do nothing to create security. It will do nothing to create at least a sense of stability with regard to energy use. We have seen a number of vivid examples that have caused a traumatic and very painful discourse in our communities with regard to Union Gas and other products. We have seen prices increase. We have seen people being gone after retroactively. People cannot come up with these funds. That is wrong in terms of the way we have been moving toward energy. We are still going down this same path and we will see how it works out. Hopefully somebody else will ride in, be able to provide it cheaper and competition will lower prices. That will not necessarily happen in a monopoly industry like this.

We have seen a lot of weaknesses in some of the agreements we have in terms of energy provision. There is a new plant being developed in Windsor but we still do not know if any of the energy it produces will stay in Windsor or Ontario or Canada. It will be exported to the United States. It is great that this new plant will create a few jobs but it will also create environmental issues such as

pollution and a number of different things. We will not derive any benefit from it and we may not even get any of that power. If we do, we may have to pay a premium for it because we will have to buy it back from the U.S. It does not make any sense.

Consumers, the general public, want legislation that will protect the viability and, more important, the reliability of prices in their energy use. We can do that by looking at a long term strategy with regard to the environment, by looking at how we want to move forward with producing power that is more sustainable, power with a vision, power that is multifaceted. Narrowing the scope of liability and allowing people to derive a lot of profit out of this while not being at risk for anything is the wrong way to go.

● (1230)

Mr. Joe Jordan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the NDP member and point out that through his mannerisms he does not seem to be as sore as I am after playing soccer last night against the EU diplomats. Perhaps he is younger.

The member did make a very interesting point. In the early stages of Parliament it is sometimes tough to be as informed on these issues as possible, so I will stick to the concepts because he has hit on a few things that I have to agree with. I will preface this with a very short story.

A number of years ago I bought a commercial property in a small town in Ontario. On the day the deal was supposed to close, I got an emergency call from my banker who said that because there was a gas station six properties away from mine, which might leak gas, the liability originally assessed on my property and which set the interest rate would change. I looked at my watch, thinking that the deal would close in an hour and all of a sudden the bank was concerned about potential liability, as it should have been.

One of the things that we have to ensure we work toward incorporating into our free market is the assumption of the full cost. The price of things should take into consideration the cost of things, and one of those costs is waste streams. If we look at the problems we have with pollution, that is because pollution pays. It is good business to pollute because in most cases people get away with it. They do not incur any cost. Companies that take on these responsibilities because they have a higher moral standard find they are getting the crap kicked out of them with the price of their goods and services. So good regulation is important.

On the surface this bill concerns me. As the member rightly pointed out, solar power, investments in research and development, and wind power should benefit from the fact that they do not have this potential liability.

If we remove the risk for the lenders, let us not kid ourselves: If there is a problem we know who will pay. It will be the people we represent. I am interested in the member's comments on how the notion of full costing might be impaired, if I am interpreting correctly the changes to the legislation being proposed here today.

Government Orders

Mr. Brian Masse: Mr. Speaker, I say to the member that I am sore as well from playing soccer yesterday. I had to stretch out several times this morning.

It is an important issue with regard to the costing of the whole process. It is unfortunate and a good example in terms of legislation and the lack of communication is that you could actually purchase and make a financial investment on a very important piece of property for yourself and your family's future and within an hour before it was finalized, your lawyer notified you of that. The lawyer did not catch it, or whatever happened. That is a very serious problem. We have run into this in our municipality a number of times and it has caused a lot of problems.

We have to look at the larger picture with regard to costing, with regard to opening up the window for the lenders. I still believe that you are investing in something and you are responsible for those investments. This bill weakens that. I really believe that you should have to have some type of connection to that. It is a very high risk business. It potentially comes with unlimited profits.

We do not know how much energy will cost in 10 years or 20 years. We know there are going to be shortages. We know there is going to be development in terms of world population. We are involved in exporting more energy resources to the United States and we actually have agreements that bind us to that.

We do not know what the potential profit will be. Hopefully we will have decent pricing, a decent environment and a fairer system at the end of the day that people can afford, but there is a great potential for huge profits to be made out of that. That is why I believe there still should be a connection there and it should be reinforced and not eroded.

• (1235)

The Deputy Speaker: Before I direct the next question to the hon. member for Fraser Valley, let me just take a moment to remind the hon. member for Windsor West that all interventions must be made through the Chair. In other words, in speaking to an hon. member, it is not "you" or "your" but rather "the member". It can be useful and save a lot of fireworks or whatever else occurs from time to time.

Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, this is an interesting debate. Perhaps it is of more interest to the people in Ontario than it is to the people in B.C. at this time because there are nuclear power plants here and there are none in British Columbia where they have been banned by the provincial government. It does not look like there will be any in the near future.

I would like the member to comment on what I see as a potential conflict that his party could run into by supporting the Kyoto agreement. He mentioned the Kyoto agreement several times.

The Kyoto agreement does not mention pollution other than greenhouse gases. My fear with the Kyoto agreement being approved is that people will try to meet Kyoto targets on greenhouse gas emissions and in doing that, one of the things they will do is they will use more nuclear power. It is Kyoto friendly.

We could replace everything in the country with nuclear power and it would meet the Kyoto goals by doing that. The problem is that by supporting Kyoto and not being concerned about the greater

pollution issue, including the waste products from nuclear power plants, we end up with a contradiction. We end up supporting any kind of a project that will reduce greenhouse gases but in doing so, we end up perhaps with more nuclear waste, more nuclear power plants which are another kind of problem, and more cogeneration plants situated along the 49th parallel.

I can speak from experience in my riding because the SE2 plant is one of several dozen cogeneration plants that are to be situated along the 49th parallel, the pollution of which will end up in Canada, but there is no bilateral agreement with the Americans about air pollution, about particulate matter. Everybody is so focused on Kyoto that we end up with people making corporate decisions, and government decisions like we are discussing here today, not based on what is good for the country pollution-wise but based on what is good in order to meet Kyoto targets.

I would like the member to consider that. I am quite concerned that by heading down this path, in essence we will be saying that more nuclear power is great because it is Kyoto friendly. I have a concern, as do the people in British Columbia. Frankly I am more concerned about the nuclear waste and the problems that entails than I am about some of the other possible energy producers.

I am afraid that approving Kyoto may result in reduced greenhouse gases but may actually cause other pollutants to rise. I would like the member to think about this.

Mr. Brian Masse: Mr. Speaker, the member raised a couple of good points that we need to consider with regard to Kyoto.

It has often been described by most people as a baby step. It is important to recognize that Kyoto is just the beginning in terms of what we need to do to turn the planet around to be sustainable. Kyoto and the terminology that has been used to express it, the devastation that it would wreak upon our businesses, our communities, our lifestyles and all those different things, just shows the fear that has been propagated out there. It is not accurate. Kyoto is just a baby step in dealing with this.

Sure we could go down this path if we wanted to use green credits or something similar with regard to nuclear power. I do not think that is right. We should be moving to more sustainable energy and exporting that if we can through wind and other energy efforts. Conservation has not been talked about as something we need to do as a society.

Kyoto is just the start of things in terms of turning the planet around. If we want to use nuclear power as a way of being able to escape it in the sense of not doing our part, that would be wrong. I hope that our government would not head down that road. If it does create those additional byproducts that are so bad for our society and so bad for our environment and which would leave a legacy, and they are literally a legacy for other people to deal with, then that is wrong.

Kyoto can be an important start and we do not have to use nuclear energy as a way of doing that. That would be a terrible decision by our government. It would be a backhanded slap on Kyoto and not really deal with the issue in terms of creating the sustainable energy we need through products that are going to be a benefit for us in the long term and not let other people deal with it.

• (1240)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Antoine Dubé (Lévis-et-Chutes-de-la-Chaudière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the new member for Windsor West on his speech.

In short, what is being proposed by the government is to take responsibilities away from financial institutions with regard to any future needs for decontamination.

I would like to hear the member's views on that. It seems obvious to me that financial institutions fear the effects and the impossibility of eliminating nuclear waste. That in fact is why they have asked the government to introduce this amendment.

[*English*]

Mr. Brian Masse: Mr. Speaker, those were great points.

One of the biggest things with regard to this whole amendment is allowing people to escape responsibility and that is not right. One should not be able to escape responsibility. If one is going to invest in something, then one should own up to it with regard to getting a benefit but also be responsible at the end of the day for what it causes for everyone else.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca.

I am pleased to speak to Bill C-4, the reincarnation of Bill C-57, an act to amend the Nuclear Safety and Control Act.

The bill is necessary to correct a clause that prevents debt financing by the private sector for the nuclear industry. Lenders such as banks and other financial institutions are refusing to consider approval for loans to the nuclear industry because the clause in the current act makes the lenders liable in the case of a nuclear spill.

This week Ontario residents are opening up their electricity bills to find that the rates charged are double what they were on their last bills. This is due in part to power providers having to purchase electricity from the U.S. to meet the unexpectedly high demands during the summer just past.

Canada has the highest rate of taxes in the G-8 and that, combined with the government's seeming reluctance to pay down the national debt as fast as reasonably possible, have contributed to our dollar having just half the value of the American dollar. Therefore, Ontario electricity providers must fork over twice as much when purchasing power from the United States.

Units in two of Ontario's nuclear power generating plants have been out of service. It takes money to upgrade reactors and due to the flaw in the original legislation, capital could not be accessed to do the necessary servicing to get the plants working at their maximum capacities.

Ontario electricity consumers can also directly attribute their astronomically high bills to the federal Liberals' democratic deficit. Legislation is rammed through without proper scrutiny because of the concentration of power in the Prime Minister's Office. Committees have become mere tokens in the parliamentary system because Liberal MPs are herded in for votes without even knowing

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what the motion is about that they are voting on, understanding only that they must obey their whips or suffer retribution. Indeed, Parliament as a whole has become dysfunctional, not just tainted by the Liberal corruption but because Liberal MPs are not permitted to think for themselves.

If the government had drafted the Nuclear Safety and Control Act correctly the first time, fixed income recipients in Ontario, those on disability and CPP retirement pensions, may not have been put in the predicament they now find themselves in. To add insult to injury, the Liberals are making a killing on their negligence because GST is charged not only on the cost of the energy distributed but on the debt repayment portion of the Ontario hydro bill. That \$5, \$10 or \$50 extra in GST might not be a lot of money to the members across the way who dispense cash to their friends and family in the hundreds of thousands of dollars, but to the people in my riding of Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, it symbolizes the disdain the Liberals have for everyday Canadians.

To exacerbate the situation, power companies are demanding payment two weeks sooner. This means that instead of a bill coming due on the eighth of next month, it is due on the 24th of this month. People in Ontario had no way of predicting this price hike. For those who do not receive an income cheque until the end of the month, the bills are due at the beginning of November and interest and late penalty charges will be levied on top.

Money borrowed for nuclear power producers also goes into science research and development. Significant research is being conducted into means of disposing of spent fuel and waste.

For example, just a few months ago at Chalk River Laboratories, we celebrated the official opening of the modular above ground storage facility. For AECL senior vice-president Dave Torgerson, and the project manager, Ken Philipose, it was a moment to mark achievement. The facility's supervisor, Murray Wright, demonstrated how the supercompactor works. Under the direction of Dr. Colin Allan, decommissioning and waste management methods are continuously evolving.

The question of long term disposal of spent fuel and waste is a hurdle in promoting nuclear power as a clean, affordable energy source. Power generated by our nation's Candu technology is the cleanest, safest, most efficient in the world. Whereas the burning of fossil fuel results in tonnes of noxious gases being released into the atmosphere, spent fuel from nuclear reactors remains safely contained in vessels. Currently, spent fuel can be safely stored for decades, but a long term disposal method is being pursued.

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•(1245)

Nature is giving scientists clues into disposal methods, because at least 17 nuclear reactors exist in nature herself. For example, there is the Oklo uranium deposit in the West African country of Gabon. Due to the natural decay of radioactive elements, its concentrations were much higher in the past. Groundwater flowing through the deposit acted as a neutron moderator so that uranium fission reactions started spontaneously and continued for hundreds of thousands of years. The site at Oklo forms a valuable laboratory for studying how nature disposes of radioactive wastes from nuclear reactors. The fission products have long ago decayed to stable elements. Close study has shown that the stable daughter products have not migrated from the site and have remained remarkably immobile.

The Prime Minister has decreed that Canada will ratify the Kyoto protocol, a treaty designed to transfer wealth from Canada to emerging economies in Africa and other third world countries. He has stated point blank that consumers will bear the cost of Kyoto. Canadians will bear the cost in higher gasoline, natural gas and electricity prices.

In Ontario, where electricity bills have doubled already, people will not accept further energy increases, whether they be hidden taxes or openly categorized as some sort of green tax. GST revenues will snowball from the implementation of Kyoto. Factor Kyoto into gas prices, the possible conflict in Iraq, the already surging oil prices and the government is in for a GST windfall.

In addition to electricity to run our homes and businesses, the Canadian nuclear industry provides our citizens and people throughout the world with the gift of light. It is especially fitting that in October, Cancer Awareness Month, that we explain the vital role the nuclear industry has played in medicine. The science leading to cobalt therapy machines for cancer treatment was advanced through research activity surrounding the development of the Candu reactor. It gives people of the Ottawa Valley great satisfaction in knowing that MDS Nordion Maple reactors at Chalk River laboratories will continue to provide the world with over 70% of medical isotopes.

The technology behind MRIs emerged from the research done by scientists with the Chalk River reactor. Canada's own Bertram Neville Brockhouse won the Nobel Prize for physics in 1994 for designing the triple-axis neutron spectroscopy and his use of it to investigate condensed matter.

Neutron scattering continues to generate knowledge about materials, which is key to the growth and improvement of many aspects of Canadian life, such as health. Neutron scattering reveals the structures of biological objects such as cell membranes, viruses, proteins, drugs, food, et cetera. Today, under the guidance of John Root of the National Research Council, the study of neutron scattering is thriving.

The fundamental questions of health, disease and life processes revolve around the way these molecular structures interact with each other. Neutrons provide a uniquely powerful method to get at this fundamental knowledge by looking at the materials in the realistic environments of excess water temperature and pH. This neutron scattering knowledge is completely non-destructive to the delicate

biological materials and is a powerful complement to other methods where one has to dry out the material or make it into a crystalline form or alter the material by adding marker atoms.

Canadians have already developed a neutron scattering method to determine structures of simple viruses and to learn how viruses penetrate cell walls, the onset of disease and where a drug lodges in the membrane wall.

Construction of the Canadian neutron facility has yet to commence, which is another Liberal broken promise. The science generated through this project will help metallographers like Al Lockley, who analyzes microstructure of material to understand why things break, and will assist Ron Resmer in studying surface properties such as corrosion.

Making good on the 2000 election CNF promise is a necessary step in preventing future energy shortages. Bill C-4 will enable the private sector at home and abroad to partner with Canadians in the quest for neutron science.

•(1250)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Antoine Dubé (Lévis-et-Chutes-de-la-Chaudière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we can tell the member's speech was well prepared. Obviously, people can say anything they want in a democracy.

Right from the beginning, she had questions. She wanted to know if members opposite always scrupulously toed the party line and did what they were told to do.

I want to put the same question to her. Does her speech reflect the party line and does she sometimes decide not to follow her whip's orders?

[*English*]

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for the question and for the compliment on the well researched speech. In regard to the question, I have recognized that the members opposite are in servitude to their whip and I can say with great confidence that up to this point I have never had to go against my whip on a vote.

Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Musquodoboit Valley—Eastern Shore, NDP): Mr. Speaker, first, I wish to thank my colleague from the Alliance Party in regard to her comments on taxation on utilities. She is absolutely right. The GST on utilities is something that seniors or those on fixed incomes just cannot handle. However she also said in her speech that nuclear energy is safe and cheap. Unfortunately she is wrong on both counts.

When it comes to nuclear energy, we have to take in the cost of the byproducts forever. What happens to the nuclear waste? She may well know that there is the Point Lepreau nuclear plant in New Brunswick. Just to get it up to standard will cost close to \$900 million, and that is a conservative estimate at best. Following September 11, nuclear power plants are more a target now than they have ever been in their history.

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Could she reiterate why she thinks nuclear power is safe and cheap?

• (1255)

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Mr. Speaker, it is particularly apropos that he recognizes that people in Ontario are being heavily taxed for their power. That is why a safe, efficient and clean form of electricity is really important to us in Ontario.

In terms of safety, if the member were to look at the accidents and deaths resulting from coal powered plants or the industries that mine and produce the coal for the industries, I think the member would find that there have been far more accidents than in nuclear industry. In fact there have been no deaths in Canada attributed to the nuclear industry.

In terms of cheap, it is becoming more cost effective and will become increasingly so with the implementation of the Kyoto protocol.

In so far as waste goes, only 1% of the fuel, the uranium, is transformed during the process.

Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for her speech. I continue to hear from the chattering group in the NDP a kind of a sucking and blowing sound at the same time. What we have is a group of people who are dead set against nuclear energy creation but totally supportive of the Kyoto accord. Of course it is just silliness.

What I would like the hon. member to comment on is another great thing that is supposed to save the world from all kinds of problems, the Ballard fuel cell. The creator of the Ballard fuel cell was quoted in the paper the other day as saying that we should not sign the Kyoto accord rather we should build more nuclear power plants because we will need them to create enough hydrogen to power the Ballard fuel cell. In other words, this debate about nuclear energy and the Kyoto accord needs to be taken holistically in the sense of how we will create sustainable, long term energy requirements for a western democracy.

Could the member comment on what she sees as the balance between growing energy requirements and the Kyoto accord, which the NDP would have us support but yet would dictate to many Canadians what type of power they would use in the future?

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Mr. Speaker, I think part of that sucking and blowing might be the members at the end of the room trying to get their fires started because there will to be a real shortage of energy coming this winter.

I thank the member for the question on the Ballard fuel cells because the beauty of a nuclear reactor is that when it is not generating electricity in its down phase it can be producing the hydrogen necessary to put into the fuel cells. The two technologies really go hand in hand.

Insofar as the balance between Kyoto and our emerging energy needs, it is interesting to note that nuclear generated power is so efficient that had we been allowed to allocate carbon credits toward the use of nuclear energy, Canada would have controlled the entire carbon credit market. That is how beneficial it is in terms of reducing greenhouse gases.

Mr. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, this has been a very interesting debate in the House on an exceedingly important issue, given the fact that Parliament will be asked to ratify or not to ratify the Kyoto accord.

I draw the attention of the House to a very important fact. There is a lot of misinformation or misnomers about nuclear power. It has its upsides and downsides, particularly with respect to effete fuel rods that are byproducts of nuclear power.

We are concerned about the reduction of pollution of not only greenhouse gas emissions which are not pollution because they are primarily carbon dioxide. However pollution from coal burning generators that produce various particulate matter causes many health problems particularly in southern Ontario and border states.

Here is a very important and interesting fact. With 40% of the global market share Canadian uranium is powering commercial reactors that void over one billion tonnes of carbon dioxide each year which contribute to greenhouse gas emissions.

If we want to reduce carbon dioxide and greenhouse gas emissions the question arises about how we will do it. It will not magically happen by virtue of doing nothing. We have an obligation to meet our power obligations and the energy requirements of a growing population. How are we to do it?

The answer that we can perhaps adopt is one that involves the adoption of a large array of different energy sources including nuclear power. The utilization of nuclear power in an appropriate setting will reduce pollution, will reduce carbon dioxide and greenhouse gas emissions, and will enable us to meet our energy demands.

It is not the whole answer by any means. As I mentioned we have to dispose of the fuel rods. That is a significant problem. There is a potential risk of problems with the reactor that can happen in any event, but we have to accept the fact that nuclear power is here to stay. We must use it in appropriate amounts and in balance with other energy sources.

The other side of the coin is how we meet our Kyoto requirements. How do we reduce our carbon dioxide emissions which are not, I might add, pollution as we have come to know it?

It is sad that Kyoto is a shell game. The way Canada has actually adopted Kyoto is not to reduce the emissions of carbon dioxide that we as a country are supposed to do. Through an energy trading scheme we will actually enable our country to produce more greenhouse gas emissions in exchange for giving money to other countries that have larger carbon sinks, which are basically forests. That is what is happening.

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All members of the House, including the public who is watching, want to reduce carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions. Will Kyoto as we have organized it do that? The answer is a flat no because it is a shell game of moving around the ability of producing greenhouse gas emissions in exchange for paying money to other countries that do not produce as much as we do.

In effect, if Canada signs on to Kyoto we as a country will not reduce our greenhouse gas emissions. That is counterintuitive on the surface but those are the facts. Then the question arises of how we manage to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Last week I attended a very interesting breakfast meeting with a gentleman by the name of Mr. Anderson who runs a large company in the U.S. His company, a very energy demanding company, produces carpets. It managed to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 50%. How did the company do that? It did that by being able to conserve energy and increase the efficiencies of the process that entailed less demand.

His thesis is as follows. First, Canada can meet its greenhouse gas emissions under Kyoto and beyond by using available technologies to save energy. In the manner in which we build our buildings using existing technologies we can save huge amounts of money and huge amounts of energy utilization

• (1300)

Second, we need to use existing technologies in a manner in which other industries actually use their energy. There is much we can do in conservation, much we can do in efficiencies of energy utilization, much we can do in terms of increasing the carbon sinks that take carbon dioxide out of the environment and actually turn it into an innocent substance, water. If we crunch the numbers we will be able to meet our Kyoto requirements and beyond.

A man by the name of Ralph Torrie in Ottawa has crunched the numbers. He has come up with a very provocative set of solutions that will enable us to meet and go beyond those emissions standards, which is what we have to do anyway, and not take on the oil patch, interestingly enough. In the end 95% of our Kyoto requirements can be met by using energy resources more efficiently and using existing technologies to save energy, for example, in the manner in which we build buildings. There is much that can be done to build buildings in a way that conserves energy more efficiently. If we do that the energy savings are massive.

If we look back in history we see the manner in which we have employed new technologies to make buildings more efficient and to save energy, particularly with cars. We find that the bulk savings in greenhouse gas emissions and pollution are so large that they dwarf our commitments under Kyoto, which is very interesting.

We are saying that there are solutions out there. People have done the work in our country which demonstrates very clearly that we have the industrial capabilities and the technology to meet our Kyoto requirements and go beyond them. We know our Kyoto requirements will only affect a very small percentage of what we ought to be dealing with in terms of our emissions.

In summary, Canada must employ some key policy initiatives. First, in a rational economy energy should be developed and used in

response to the demand for goods and services, not to produce energy for its own sake.

Second, emissions reduction strategies should be based on existing technologies that have been shown to be effective and economic.

Third, in the future Canadians will continue to expect economic growth and social mobility. Our low carbon scenario anticipates that we can have a 50% per capita reduction in GDP.

The implementation plan should not rely on punitive energy taxes. However a good plan should reflect the full cost of each energy option, including the subsidies that currently flow to petroleum and nuclear production, as well as health and environmental costs.

Energy from local small scale sources will encourage greater self-reliance and insulate consumers from geopolitical crises such as what we are seeing in the Middle East and large scale system failures as we have seen in other countries.

Working with these principles, Canada can achieve the following using existing technologies with current economic assumptions. The first is a doubling of the thermal efficiency of residential and commercial buildings. This again means using current technologies in the manner in which we build buildings that increase efficiencies in energy savings.

The second is a doubling of the fuel efficiency of truck fleets. There are technologies that can be applied to trucks that can greatly reduce pollution coming out the other end.

The third involves a tripling of the efficiency of the passenger car fleet and a doubling of the average efficiency of electrical devices including lighting, motors and appliances, a 1% per year improvement in the energy efficiency of industrial output, a phasing out of coal and less demands on other generating plants.

If we do that we will meet our economic targets, save money, meet our environmental standards and have a healthier environment.

• (1305)

Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Musquodoboit Valley—Eastern Shore, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the hon. member on his rather great soccer play last night. For the record, members of Parliament lost to the European Union eight to one. We will get them the next time.

The member is absolutely correct when he says that even if we sign and ratify Kyoto the government will not have the courage to meet its commitments. I am in agreement with that. The fact is that anyone who has read Kyoto knows that at best it is the minimum requirements.

He knows very well that we in the western world make up 25% of the world's population. We eat up 75% of the world's resources. He is absolutely correct when he says that many companies are ignoring the government and going ahead with their own greenhouse reductions right now.

The member has a lot of people in his riding and he understands. We hear from the business community that Kyoto would be disastrous for the country and for workers. Yet he also knows that many workers and representatives of CEP, CAW and many others have agreed that Kyoto should be met.

Many of these workers are in his riding. Would he not agree with them? If the workers are ready to ratify Kyoto, why would his party not be ready to ratify Kyoto?

• (1310)

Mr. Keith Martin: Mr. Speaker, let me preface my comments by saying that my colleague and friend is the coach of our soccer team and did an exemplary job of leading us. We will do better the next time.

The reason our party does not want to support Kyoto is not because we are against reducing greenhouse gas emissions. We want a plan that will truly reduce greenhouse gas emissions without negatively affecting our economy.

Can it be done? Absolutely. That is what I articulated in this plan today. The technology exists today to meet our greenhouse gas emission targets while not affecting our economy. If we use that technology we will be able to do that.

Unfortunately Kyoto is a shell game. My friend knows full well that the government has made this into a shell game. We are to pay countries like Russia to buy the ability to produce greenhouse gases. We will produce the same amount of greenhouse gases and say disingenuously that we have met our commitments.

We have not met our commitments. All we have done is shunted our greenhouse gas emissions to another country by giving it the money to produce more greenhouse gases. That will do absolutely nothing to reduce greenhouse gases.

I ask the member to look at some of the work that has been done. The Sierra Club has done some good work. Ralph Torrie has done some good work. Others have done some excellent work in our country articulating specific solutions that can improve energy efficiency and reduce greenhouse gas emissions from homes, cars and trucks. If we employ them we will meet our commitments and go beyond them.

Mr. David Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I would like a little clarification from my colleague who did an excellent job in his speech today. Is he suggesting that we have a choice?

It seems on one hand we have a protocol that will lock us into limits on greenhouse gases which other countries do not have. Then, in order to reach those limits, we will have to take from \$2 billion to \$5 billion per year to pay another country to buy credits from it so that we can meet our standards.

We have information that there will be a tremendous impact on agriculture. The only study that has been done is out of the United

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States. It indicates that it will cost farm production billions of dollars and depress annual farm incomes by 24% to 48%.

Does the member not think it would be better if we had a made in Canada solution where we work together to set the standards for our own country and then spend our \$2 billion to \$5 billion in Canada to reach those standards rather than giving it to someone else to buy artificial credits?

Mr. Keith Martin: Mr. Speaker, I will reiterate to explain to the people who are listening what this means. Basically, the way the government has organized this to meet our Kyoto requirements, we as a country will give taxpayer money to a country like Russia. In exchange we will receive the ability to produce more carbon dioxide and greenhouse gas emissions. Then we can say we have met our obligations but we have not in effect reduced our greenhouse gas emissions at all.

In short, we could reduce greenhouse gas emissions by doubling the thermal efficiency of residential and commercial buildings, doubling the fuel efficiency of truck fleets, tripling the efficiency of car fleets and doubling the average efficiency of electrical devices including lighting, motors and appliances. If we do that we will reduce our greenhouse gas emissions and we will go beyond Kyoto.

• (1315)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Pauline Picard (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the question of nuclear safety and regulations is of interest to me. As a resident and the elected representative of an area located in central Quebec, I live very close to the Bécancour nuclear plant, which is about forty minutes north of Drummondville.

Let me just start by saying once again that my party is against Bill C-4.

First, we believe that the hazards relating to nuclear energy require tighter regulations than for any other type of energy.

Second, if financial backers find this too risky an investment, there is no reason for society to see it differently.

Third, the government should focus its efforts on developing clean energy such as wind power.

Finally, where energy is concerned, the Bloc Québécois also demands, first and foremost, ratification of Kyoto.

What is the purpose of this bill? It amends the legislation to vary the classes of persons that the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission may order to take measures to reduce the level of contamination of a place.

Currently, the Nuclear Safety and Control Act allows the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission to “order that the owner or occupant or—this is the point bill C-4 seeks to amend—any other person with a right to or interest in, the affected land or place take the prescribed measures to reduce the level of contamination”.

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I understand that the scope of the phrase “any other person with a right to or interest in, the affected land or place” is rather broad. More simply put, this means that any person with an interest may be made to pay should a spill or other problem occur.

It is conceivable that a bank that granted a loan to a nuclear plant could be sued and would have to pay out a lot of money. It then becomes easier to understand the purpose of the bill, which seeks to exempt third parties from possible legal action. It is a way of protecting those likely to finance the nuclear industry.

So the bill seeks to replace “any other person with a right or interest in, the affected land or place take the prescribed measures to reduce the level of contamination” with a less stringent statement narrower in scope. The amendment would read as follows, “any other person who has the management and control of, the affected land or place take the prescribed measures to reduce the level of contamination”.

This amendment would exempt a whole group, including banks, from the obligation to decontaminate. We believe this amendment to the legislation is inappropriate.

The use of nuclear energy involves risks, huge risks. Obviously every technical precaution is taken to avoid an accident that would be both dangerous and costly. The way nuclear plants operate makes it impossible for a fission reaction to get out of control and for a reactor to explode.

However, the reactor's water pipes may break and, in spite of reactor containment, slightly radioactive water might be released as steam into the atmosphere or into surrounding bodies of water.

In the most serious cases, the fuel might melt down and release very radioactive substances into the environment. There might be a power outage that would disable the reactor and its safety systems. This is why there are numerous independent electrical circuits.

● (1320)

Earthquakes, attacks or plane crashes are unlikely events that are taken into account in the design of the plant and during its operation.

It must be said that, in Canada, there has been no serious accident in nuclear plants where the people living nearby were subjected to nuclear radiation. Strong efforts are made by operators to always increase the security and the reliability of reactors. But we must not forget that there is always an element of risk.

Even when everything is fine, the production of radioactive waste has in itself harmful consequences in the long term. As in all industrial activity, the use of energy and radiation produces waste, which comes from power plants, other nuclear installations, nuclear medicine services, research labs, and so on. Nuclear waste is essentially made up of contaminated objects and materials as well as products resulting from uranium fission.

Nuclear waste is classified according to its characteristics: its radioactivity level and its lifespan. Each category of waste is managed differently. Approximately 90% of waste has a short lifespan. The radioactivity of waste will decrease to a level comparable to natural radioactivity in several hundred years. The remaining 10% has a long lifespan.

We ask ourselves this: what will be the impact of nuclear waste on future generations?

The use of nuclear energy raises a lot of questions. For example: is there sufficient data to analyze the biological effects of artificial radioactivity?

I know that serious research on the consequences of significant levels of radiation started with the follow-up on the victims of Hiroshima. An unusually high incidence of breast cancer was detected in that population. Since then, many biological and ecological studies have been conducted, and our knowledge of the effects on humans and on the environment, meaning plants and animals, is ever increasing. Yet numerous questions remain unanswered, like the effects of low levels of radiation.

Here is another question: how can the ground be decontaminated after an accident? The techniques vary depending on the size of the area. Large areas cannot be decontaminated. The only solution is to restrict access, to put strict controls on agricultural production and to avoid the resuspension of radioelements, through fires for example. If the area is small, such as a prairie, the ground can be scoured, since radioactivity is concentrated in the top ten centimetres of soil, and the radioactive waste can then be stored.

For very small areas, chemicals can also be used to wash the contaminated area, but these must then be stored just like waste. It is a costly process.

Let us get back to the Minister of Natural Resources who, in this bill, is proposing an amendment he believes to be of an administrative nature.

We think that if the minister can argue that lenders were facing an unknown financial risk that could be disproportionate to their commercial interest, is the population not facing the same risk should a nuclear accident occur? It is important to ask ourselves that question.

A simple cost-benefit analysis shows that the investment is not worth the risk and, for a bank, the risk of having to pay for decontamination some day is just too great.

● (1325)

If the banks feel the risks are too high, why should we feel otherwise? Why give this energy special treatment, when it is far from being considered clean energy, and when alternatives exist? Why would the government not turn to clean and renewable energies?

It is certainly topical to be discussing responsibility for our environment. We in the Bloc Québécois are in favour of developing alternative energies and have, moreover, already proposed an investment plan of some \$700 million over 5 years to encourage the development of wind energy in Quebec. This plan alone might help create 15,000 jobs in Quebec, in Gaspé for the most part, where jobs are greatly needed.

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In the throne speech of last week, the government spoke of its intention to ensure a healthy environment and to rise to the challenge of climate change. We are aware that our geographical position will make us vulnerable to such changes sooner than other countries. The government has made a commitment to meet its obligations as far as greenhouse gas emissions are concerned, and now it must stop hemming and hawing and start taking action. That is why we in the Bloc Québécois have proposed a major federal wind energy program for the Gaspé.

As I have already mentioned, the Bloc Québécois has proposed a federal investment program in the wind energy industry of \$700 million over five years. This amount is equivalent, on a per capita basis, to the federal aid to Newfoundland for the Hibernia project. The federal government has the means to do so, as proven by its \$9.8 billion surplus for fiscal year 2001-02.

The objective is to create a wind power capacity of a minimum of 1,000 megawatts in Quebec, mainly in the Gaspé. In order to accomplish this, a strong wind power industry needs to be developed. I remind hon. members that installation of such an industry would have the potential to create, as a conservative estimate, 15,000 jobs.

That is why the program will focus on the building of plants manufacturing wind turbines. These projects must, of necessity, include a significant local content component as well as an aspect aimed at bolstering regional industry.

Other aspects of the program can provide grants to farmers or landowners interested in this form of energy. The government could, for example, help with the necessary bank loans to purchase equipment at advantageous 10-year interest rates.

As well, the program could also contain elements to facilitate the construction of infrastructure, such as highways or power transmission lines.

Let us get back to the ratification of the Kyoto accord. The position of the Bloc Québécois on environmental protection has been known for a long time. Incidentally, several city councils my riding of Drummond have sent me resolutions supporting the ratification of the Kyoto protocol. I have given these resolutions to the hon. member for Rosemont—Petite-Patrie, who is a passionate advocate of this issue.

The Quebec National Assembly adopted a unanimous motion supporting the ratification of the Kyoto protocol, but the federal government is constantly dithering, in an attempt to back out of its commitments, while Europe has confirmed that it will ratify the accord. A number of ministers, including the Minister of Natural Resources and the Minister of Industry, have acted as spokespersons for the western oil lobby, in an attempt to impede the ratification process.

Quebec believes that reducing greenhouse gas emissions will not only benefit the environment and future generations, but will also promote innovation and new investments that will give new momentum to our economy.

The fact that the environmental impact of climate change is huge for Canada and Quebec cannot be ignored. One does not need to be

an expert to see the effects: the increasing frequency of floods and droughts, the damage caused to our natural areas, not to mention the higher incidence of several infectious diseases, are convincing enough.

• (1330)

In February 2001, an article published in the daily *La Presse* mentioned the following, regarding the fact that the level of water in the St. Lawrence River was getting lower:

The flow of the St. Lawrence River will be reduced, but the rise in the sea level will increase the risk of flooding along the shores. In the Prairies, crops will be affected by drought.

What else? The poorer quality of the air we breath generates astronomical health costs. In June 2002, the Ontario Medical Association said that annual costs amounted to \$1 billion because of the greater number of hospitalizations, visits to the emergency room and absenteeism.

At some point, we will have to deal with these issues. Moreover, people, particularly children, are developing more and more allergies. We have yet to deal with the issue of why there is an increasing number of people who are allergic to food items, to dust and to all sorts of things we breathe. It goes without saying that this is related to climate change. Be that as it may, we will have to collect data and do research on this. It is very important that we look at this issue to improve people's health and quality of life.

Since the ratification of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in 1992, Quebec has exercised strong leadership on the Canadian scene. After endorsing by decree the objectives of the convention, Quebec implemented a first action plan on climate change in 1996, and a second one in the year 2000.

Following on the unanimous resolution passed in the National Assembly in April 2001, the Government of Quebec came down repeatedly in favour of ratification of the Kyoto protocol by Canada. Because of its dithering, the federal government is preventing Quebec from expressing its views worldwide and playing a leading role in environmental issues.

It is perfectly legitimate for Quebec to expect a positive return on the actions and the decisions made in the past as far as energy and the environment are concerned. We believe that these innovative moves will allow it to maintain its economic growth and the competitiveness of local businesses at every level: interprovincially, continentally and internationally.

In Quebec, we believe that a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions can lead to technological innovation that can revitalize our economy. The government of the Parti Québécois wants the economy to be dynamic.

The development of new technologies, like wind power, gives us the opportunity to set up structuring industries in the regions. The diversification of regional economies would ensure a better future for the next generation.

Moreover, according to a study released by the Analysis and Modelling Group in November 2001 and published by *Le Devoir* on January 29, 2002, and I quote:

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With the ratification of Kyoto, sales of the Canadian environmental industry would go up, from \$427 million to \$7 billion a year until 2010.

Other benefits worth mentioning include a better environment, which would lead to better health. Social benefits from a more healthy population could reach \$500 million a year.

Since I am being shown that I only have one minute left, I will conclude. I could have addressed the issue by talking about the assistance the federal government has already provided to other energy industries. Billions of dollars have been spent on developing industries using fossil fuels, \$66 billion to be specific, four times the health budget for Quebec, in the form of direct subsidies to the oil and gas industry.

While wind energy is growing and creating jobs everywhere else in the world, the Liberal government wants to relax the rules to promote the development of a type of energy that involves high costs and risks not only for us, but also for future generations.

That is why I am against Bill C-4, An Act to amend the Nuclear Safety and Control Act .

• (1335)

[*English*]

Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Musquodoboit Valley—Eastern Shore, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member from the Bloc Québécois for her speech. I know that the Bloc Québécois in the House year in and year out has stressed environmental concerns and questions on behalf of its constituents. It should be congratulated for that.

One of the greatest fears I have of amending the Nuclear Safety and Control Act is that the Liberal government will continue on the path that it continues on all the time.

Mr. Speaker, you were here when Sergio Marchi was the environment minister and literally overnight changed the laws. Even though the Sierra Club took it to the Supreme Court and lost, the government changed the laws to where it could sell Candu reactors to China and at the same time give China \$1.5 billion taxpayer dollars in order to assist in buying them.

This country has also sold Candu reactors to India and Pakistan. It is no coincidence that years later these two countries are testing nuclear weapons. If one were to stretch that argument out, there is a very good chance the nuclear weapons being tested by China could have a Canadian element to them.

I would like the hon. member from the Bloc Québécois to explain her party's position on Candu reactor or nuclear sales to other countries around the world that may or may not have questionable dealings in nuclear missile technology.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Pauline Picard: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from the New Democratic Party for his comments. The information he has just given us is very important. Indeed, if it is not good for us, then nor is it good for other countries.

Today there are alternatives that are less dangerous for people. Earlier a colleague from the Canadian Alliance said that there had not yet been any accidents, and that this was reassuring. Personally,

that does not reassure me all that much. Yes, we have been lucky to have escaped an accident like the one Russia had, but we cannot say that there are no risks. We cannot say that there is zero risk.

We should be working on what the Bloc Québécois proposed: developing alternative measures. For electricity, in terms of energy, this could also be produced with wind energy. We have an example in the Lower St. Lawrence and in the Gaspé Peninsula. This energy benefits everyone. It has been proven to be sustainable and clean.

For those who come from out west, last year the Standing Committee on Finance heard from organizations out west that asked the government to help them set up wind energy facilities. The Prairies are currently experiencing climate-related problems. This year, farmers lived through a disastrous drought. We know this is caused by climate change. People out west cannot deny that they are now experiencing the ill effects of greenhouse gas emissions.

So, these organizations came to tell the government that if it supported them through grants, they would set up wind energy facilities. As in the Gaspé Peninsula, they have the wind required for this energy source to work. They were aware of the great advantages. Furthermore, this energy creates jobs.

Who is saying this? Not I, nor the Bloc Québécois. The U.S. Department of Energy has stated that wind energy generates more employment per dollar invested than any other technology. It creates five times more jobs than thermal, coal and nuclear energy.

The European Wind Energy Association has estimated that every megawatt of wind energy that is installed creates approximately 60 jobs per year, with another 15-19 jobs directly or indirectly. Consequently, the 3,500 megawatts newly installed in Europe in 1993 apparently created 72,000 jobs. To confirm what the association was saying, in Germany, in 2001, wind energy created employment for more than 30,000 people.

I do not know how I can emphasize any more the importance of developing wind energy, a source of healthy, clean, sustainable and risk-free energy.

• (1340)

Mr. Gilles-A. Perron (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ): Mr. Speaker, first I want to congratulate my charming and elegant colleague from Drummond. I could tell during her speech that she is not very enthusiastic about the development of nuclear energy. In fact, she does not seem to be in favour of it at all.

I have one big concern. This morning, we talked about financial protection, about protecting access to funding, about energy development and about exempting lenders from their responsibilities. However there has never been a real study, a real discussion on the use of nuclear energy in this country.

Does my colleague agree with me that we should scrap Bill C-4 and undertake to have real consultation on nuclear energy and alternative energies such as wind energy, which seems to be of particular interest to the member?

Ms. Pauline Picard: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his kind words and also for his most intelligent question, which I will gladly answer.

Government Orders

First, I would certainly throw this bill in the garbage, or rather in the recycling bin to speak in environmental terms.

I am somewhat surprised that such a change is being proposed in this bill aimed at exempting lenders from their responsibilities. They stand to make money from their investments, but they will have no responsibility.

As far as the public is concerned, the government does not see things the same way. The public is also at risk from this type of energy. Even though bankers and investors in this energy will not have to take any risk, the public will have to suffer the consequences should a nuclear disaster ever occur.

Therefore I think that this bill should indeed be thrown in the recycling bin.

[English]

Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Musquodoboit Valley—Eastern Shore, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank the House for the opportunity to speak to this important bill and I thank as my colleague from Windsor for the work he has done in this regard.

We seem to have strayed away from the debate so for the record I would like to reinstate exactly what we are talking about today. The bill states:

Where, after conducting a hearing, the Commission is satisfied that there is contamination referred to in subsection (1), the Commission may, in addition to filing a notice under subsection (2), order that the owner or occupant of, or any other person who has the management and control of, the affected land or place take the prescribed measures to reduce the level of contamination.

That is basically the little change the government is making. The one thing that is offensive is the word "may". The bill states the commission may do it, but the commission may not do anything and that is a major problem.

I was involved in the union movement for years and in doing collective agreements the word may was considered very vague and ambiguous. One wanted the word "shall". It has legal meaning from what I understand, and my colleague from Windsor and others are lawyers. I suggest that the government change the word may to the word shall. If it did that, the bill would have much more meaning in ensuring that owners and people who cause contamination or whatever have a legal right to clean up that property.

I spoke on a bill of this nature during the last Parliament. At that time I said that in the end the privatization of nuclear plants will cause higher utility rates for consumers. Also, if something hits the fan, if something catastrophic happens, the owners will simply walk away because no corporation in Canada would have the funds necessary to clean up the mess and the resulting insurance liability.

What would happen? The people of that area would turn to the only place they could: their elected officials. If elected officials are required to assume responsibility in the end, then let us keep these things in public hands until the day comes when a New Democratic government is elected here and we can slowly eliminate nuclear power plants from the face of this country, and for that matter, the face of the earth. They are dangerous.

Mr. Kevin Sorenson: With Kyoto you're going to need them.

Mr. Peter Stoffer: Mr. Speaker, my colleague says we are going to need them. What we need in Canada is more alternative technologies when it comes to wind energy and solar energy, but just as important is our reduction of energy use. We are energy pigs in this country. We use more energy per capita than any other nation on the planet. That is a fact. Canadians are great people, but when it comes to energy use we are absolutely wasteful.

I want to get a little dig in at my good colleague from Fraser Valley who accused the NDP of sucking and blowing at the same time. I cannot let a comment like that go, particularly when I recall that it was that member who at one time was sitting to the left of me in something called the DRC. He did not know whether he was a Conservative, an Alliance member or an Independent, so he and a few others came up with this thing called the DRC. My colleague from Winnipeg—Transcona then gave one of the greatest speeches I have ever heard in the House, in which he said that this is the House of Commons, not a motel where one checks in under an assumed name. When the good member for Fraser Valley, whom I respect greatly, talks about sucking and blowing at the same time, all he has to do is look in the mirror and he will see who he is really referring to.

However, back to the matter at hand. The reality, as my colleague from Esquimalt said very clearly, is that even we ratify Kyoto we are not going to meet our greenhouse commitments. He is absolutely right. I do not have any confidence that the Liberal government will keep any of its promises or any of its commitments when it comes to the protection of the environment. Of all the budgets that were cut, of all the downsizing of departments since 1995, the environment department took the greatest hit. The government just assumed everything would take care of itself, but the reality is that our environment should be our number one concern, not only for this legislature but for all legislatures across the country. If people cannot drink the water, eat the food and breathe the air we are in serious trouble and nothing else matters. This is what should be our concern.

● (1345)

I want to commend all those companies and individuals that have taken it upon themselves, without direction, to reduce harmful greenhouse emissions, to reduce their energy use. I look at the great province of Nova Scotia and especially the city of Halifax, the Halifax Regional Municipality, which has instituted a very good recycling and composting program where in the span of three years we have reduced our waste by 50%. We are getting better all the time. Our recycling and composting program is a model throughout Canada, if not the world, of how waste and compost materials should be diverted from the general landfills. I encourage anyone who wishes to do the same to come down to the great city of Halifax and have a look at what we have done. They will be amazed. In fact, many people from around the world have seen it.

Business of the House

For my Alliance colleagues and others who disagree that the Kyoto protocol should be signed, all I ask them to do is talk with the workers. The CLC, CEP, CAW and many other union representatives, the workers who the business community says will be affected, have said very clearly after very careful sober thought and reflection that Kyoto must be ratified. These are the workers saying that. Well over 100 major municipalities in the country have signed an accord saying that Kyoto should be ratified. These people are not fools. These people represent labour, independent businesses, corporations, municipalities and everything else. These people do not just sit in a room, raise their hands and say “go for it”. They do this with careful consideration.

I think it is imperative for all members of Parliament to ensure that we listen to those voices out there, because Canadians are very concerned about their environment. They are also very concerned about what happens in their nuclear power plants.

One of the disasters when it comes to nuclear power plants in the country is the Point Lepreau fiasco, which goes on and on. It is a nuclear power plant in New Brunswick. A study has just been done on the Point Lepreau power plant. In order to get it up to speed, another \$900 million is needed just to get it going again. That is a conservative estimate; some very good people have researched this and have said it may be even higher.

When people say that nuclear power is cheap, it is simply not true. Nuclear power is extremely expensive in the long run when all factors are taken into consideration. What the government should be doing is ensuring that we immediately go to alternative forms of energy, such as Denmark and other countries have done.

Europe has ratified the Kyoto deal and did it without the falsehood of credits. Again my colleague was correct when he said that the credit system used by the Liberal government is a shell game to slough off the major responsibility. He is absolutely right. Imagine giving taxpayers' dollars to another country and saying “Look at what we have done. Now we have met our Kyoto commitment”. It is simple nonsense. For five years the government has known that Kyoto had to be ratified. For five years it has sat on its hands and done nothing. Now the government is in rush mode in order to tell the provinces and have consultations and give the facade that it is really serious about Kyoto. If the government were really serious about the Kyoto protocol, it would ratify it today, in the House, right now. That would show leadership.

We hear about all the fear of what is going on. We heard those same fears about the legislation for using unleaded gas. We remember very well the leaded gas argument that it was going to destroy the auto industry, it was going to destroy jobs, et cetera.

That was contrary to the truth. The fact is that using unleaded gas is much better, but we need to go much further. If we are to leave any kind of legacy, and I love that word “legacy” for the Prime Minister, it will be not how much money is in our bank account but what kind of planet we leave for our children and our children's children. That should be the key legacy of any member of Parliament, any member of a provincial legislature or any member of a municipal council. What we do to this planet has long term effects down the road. To use scare tactics is not the way. Everyone knows it has to be done, so let us get it done.

I also want to congratulate our former colleague, Mr. Nelson Riis, one of the most respected members of Parliament ever to grace the halls of the House of Commons. He moved a motion a couple of years back which stated that businesses should be allowed to have a tax deduction if they allowed their employees to have a bus pass or a transit pass.

● (1350)

That motion was passed in the House of Commons but we are still waiting for the government to move on it. Many Liberals supported it; in fact, many on the front bench supported it but we are still waiting for the legislation to come forward. Imagine the leadership the federal government would show if it initiated that. All employees would be given a transit pass or bus pass; the employer would get a tax credit and the employees could leave their cars at home. That would go a long way with businesses across the country in meeting the Kyoto commitment.

My colleague from Winnipeg had a motion about energy retrofitting of public buildings which passed in the House, but we are still waiting. The government apparently owns 50,000 units across the country. Those buildings should be retrofitted now. An incredible number of jobs would be created. An incredible amount of energy would be reduced in the long term. An incredible number of small businesses would have the advantage of jobs and contracts from that. It is a win-win situation.

However, we are still waiting for the government to act. I ask the Liberal government in all honesty and gratitude, to turn around this credit system it plans to impose on the Canadian people which will do nothing to reduce greenhouse gases and move toward some constructive solutions that we in the NDP have already provided. We in the NDP have many more suggestions for the government which would not only reduce greenhouse gases but would create jobs and also would create and protect a lot of small businesses in the entire country.

● (1355)

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Sackville—Musquodoboit Valley—Eastern Shore will have approximately eight minutes remaining on his intervention following question period. It will give him an opportunity to get his second wind, should it be necessary.

Before I go to statements by members, I want to deal with a point of order from the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre.

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BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

HUMAN RIGHTS

Ms. Anita Neville (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there have been consultations among the parties and I understand that there would be unanimous consent to permit me to propose, seconded by the hon. members for Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar; Laval Centre; Winnipeg—Transcona; and Dauphin—Swan River; and for the House to adopt without debate the following motion. I move:

That the House, noting that Nigeria has signed and ratified many international human rights legal instruments and is a leading proponent of the New Plan for Africa's Development, a central pillar of which is good governance and respect for human rights, and that the government of Nigeria has declared extreme Sharia punishments unconstitutional, request that the President of Nigeria, President Obasanjo, take all necessary steps to prevent the execution of the death sentence against Amina Lawal as in the case of Safiya Hussaini last February.

The Deputy Speaker: Does the House give its unanimous consent for the hon. member to present the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: The House has heard the terms of the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: Agreed and so ordered.
(Motion agreed to)

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*English*]

LEGACY BIKE TOUR

Mr. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the Prince Edward Island Women's Institute on the success of the 2002 Legacy Bike Tour.

This week-long event attracted 135 cyclists from across Canada and beyond who cycled 60 kilometres a day, beginning at East Point and concluding at North Cape on September 13. That is tip to tip on Prince Edward Island.

This event raised \$51,000 to help cover the cost of a videoscope machine for Prince County Hospital to assist in the early detection of colon cancer.

The Women's Institute has a long and proud history of working for island communities through fundraising efforts and promoting fitness and healthy living.

I offer congratulations to all the bikers, but especially so to the Tingley family, Rita Berrigan, Bertha Campbell and at age 84, Donald Deacon. Congratulations to the Women's Institute and the 135 cyclists for their efforts and a job well done.

* * *

PRAIRIE GRAIN FARMERS

Mr. David Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, one week ago we made the House aware that the government is preparing to jail farmers for 25 to 125 days. Three weeks from now, they will be thrown into jail. Their crime? Taking small quantities of wheat across the U.S. border and selling it or giving it away without the permission of the Canadian Wheat Board.

It is appalling that in the 21st century, the government refuses to grant prairie farmers the same basic rights and freedoms enjoyed by grain farmers in the rest of the country. It is a matter of public record that when wheat was recently exported from Ontario without a licence, no legal action was taken. Why are prairie farmers facing

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finances and jail sentences over something that is winked at in other parts of the country?

Will the minister responsible finally listen and do the right thing, or is he actually prepared to jail Canadians for marketing their own wheat? The countdown continues. He has three weeks.

* * *

● (1400)

[*Translation*]

RENAUD BERNARDIN

Mr. Robert Bertrand (Pontiac—Gatineau—Labelle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is with great sadness that I rise today to inform the House of the death of His Excellency Renaud Bernardin, ambassador for Haiti to Canada. Mr. Bernardin passed away on Friday, October 4, 2002, at 8 a.m., at the Centre hospitalier des Vallées de l'Outaouais, in Gatineau.

His Excellency Mr. Bernardin was appointed ambassador for Haiti to Canada in November 2001, a position he held at the Haitian consulate general, in Montreal.

After settling in Canada in 1967, he successively taught at Collège de Lévis, Laval University in Quebec City and Université du Québec in Chicoutimi. As a politician, he was instrumental in bringing about the shift toward democracy in his country. Among other positions held by Mr. Renaud Bernardin was that of director of the private secretariat of the first democratically elected President of Haiti, His Excellency Mr. Jean-Bertrand Aristide.

A service was held this morning in Notre-Dame Cathedral, in Ottawa. The Haitian community and the Canadian public in general have lost a valued asset. Haiti has lost a man of integrity, wisdom, respect and simplicity.

I invite the hon. members of this House to join me in paying tribute to him one last time.

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[*English*]

NATIONAL FAMILY WEEK

Mr. Mac Harb (Ottawa Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to proclaim October 7 to 13, 2002 as National Family Week.

This year the theme of National Family Week will focus on children and promoting partnerships to meet the needs of school age kids.

As parents, we all know that it takes a lot of energy, support and patience to be a good father or mother. None of us can do it alone all of the time. In fact, we need extended family, friends, neighbours and especially educators to create partnerships to ensure that our kids grow up in a happy and health environment.

In closing, I wish to thank Family Service Canada for its hard work in supporting Canadian families and children.

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GEMINI AWARD NOMINEES

Ms. Sarmite Bulte (Parkdale—High Park, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday, September 24 the Academy of Canadian Cinema and Television announced the nominees for the upcoming 17th annual Gemini Awards to be held on Monday, November 4, which celebrate excellence in Canadian television.

I would like to congratulate this year's nominees. I especially congratulate my constituent, Mary Young Leckie, together with her partner, Heather Goldin Haldane, and their company, Tapestry Pictures, who have been nominated for five Gemini Awards for *Tagged—The Jonathan Wamback Story*.

I would also like to congratulate all the nominees for *The Overcoat* which was written, conceived and designed by Morris Panych, Ken MacDonald and Wendy Gorling, and originally produced for the theatre in 1999 by the Canadian Stage Company and the Vancouver Playhouse.

Once again, my congratulations to all nominees for their dedication to providing Canadians with excellent television programming.

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AGRICULTURE

Mrs. Lynne Yelich (Blackstrap, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, climatologists have confirmed that warmer weather associated with El Nino is now under way and that Canada should begin to experience its influence by December. This will lead to a milder winter and possibly drier conditions in the prairie region next summer.

Drier conditions on the Prairies would mean a third year of drought. The government's response to this past summer's drought was slow and insensitive.

A third year of drought will have a devastating effect on farmers who have now seen their operations eroded over the past two years. Prairie farmers cannot withstand another year of off-grade grain samples, grasshoppers, low commodity prices, bankruptcies, farm foreclosures, herd dispersals and a dwindling water supply.

I urge the government to develop contingency plans to deal with the potential disaster of a third year of drought. Farmers should not be forgotten again.

* * *

NORTH AMERICAN INDIGENOUS GAMES

Ms. Nancy Karetak-Lindell (Nunavut, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this past summer more than 6,000 aboriginal youth gathered in Winnipeg for the 2002 North American Indigenous Games, a 10-day celebration of sport and culture.

Sport is an important part of aboriginal life and is a proven successful means by which to build healthy lifestyles, self-esteem and strong communities.

These games brought together the best of aboriginal sport, culture, heritage, community and spirit from throughout North America. The Government of Canada is proud to have supported this significant event.

I congratulate all those involved as volunteers, organizers and participants for the success of the 2002 North American Indigenous Games. These games contribute to the ongoing development of aboriginal sport and recreation in Canada.

I look forward to 2008 when Canada will again host this important event.

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● (1405)

[Translation]

TAIWAN'S NATIONAL DAY

Mr. Antoine Dubé (Lévis-et-Chutes-de-la-Chaudière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, on October 10, Taiwanese worldwide celebrate their national day. Many celebrations will be taking place in Taiwan, the highlight of which will be a huge gathering in front of the presidential building in Taipei. Unfortunately, these peaceful celebrations will not ease the fears of the Taiwanese people, with more than 350 Chinese missiles, some equipped with nuclear warheads, apparently pointed at their island.

The European Parliament passed a resolution calling for the removal of these missiles, which threaten the safety of the entire region. The Bloc Québécois adds its voice to that of the European Parliament in calling for an end to this threat.

Happy national day to all Taiwanese people.

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[English]

EXPORT AND IMPORT OF ROUGH DIAMONDS ACT

Mr. David Pratt (Nepean—Carleton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to thank and congratulate the Minister of Natural Resources, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and other ministers who were involved in the introduction of Bill C-14.

This legislation brings Canada into compliance with the United Nations Kimberley process and sets up a diamond certification scheme for the import and export of rough diamonds. Under the scheme, diamonds would have to be transported in tamper-proof containers with a special certificate.

Many people, including Ambassador Bob Fowler, departmental officials and the NGO, Partnership Africa-Canada, have been instrumental in moving the Kimberley process forward.

Not only does Bill C-14 address an important issue of international peace and security, it also protects the Canadian diamond industry from the taint of conflict diamonds.

I urge all my colleagues in the House to join me in supporting this important legislation and giving it the speedy passage it deserves.

AGE OF CONSENT

Mr. Darrel Stinson (Okanagan—Shuswap, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, last year the provincial justice ministers and the Canadian Police Association passed resolutions calling on the federal government to raise the age of consent for sexual activity to at least 16 years of age.

A 1999 Department of Justice paper states that the present age of consent is too low to provide effective protection for children from sexual exploitation by adults.

At the very least, the minister should increase the legal age of consent to 16. The sexual exploitation of our nation's children by adults should be one of the government's top priorities. Unfortunately, it is not.

God help the children of our country because the government surely will not.

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THE ROYAL VISIT

Ms. Sophia Leung (Vancouver Kingsway, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it was a special honour for me to meet Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip on October 7 in Vancouver.

The Queen was very friendly and interested to know about my political pursuits as a Chinese-Canadian MP. Just as the Queen said in Vancouver:

Here in British Columbia as elsewhere in Canada, you are crafting a multicultural society that provides a model for the rest of the world.

Indeed, British Columbia and Canada have been enriched by our diversity. Our beautiful people and breathtaking land are the true source of strength and harmony.

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KYOTO PROTOCOL

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis (Winnipeg North Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, with 10 days left before the eve of a critical meeting of Canadian environment ministers on the Kyoto agreement, Canadians are asking: Where is the federal government? Why is the health minister silent on the crucial health benefits of signing Kyoto?

By the government's own admission, 16,000 Canadians die prematurely every year from intensifying air pollution. Elevated pollution means a greater chance of heart attacks and higher rates of respiratory diseases like asthma.

Ozone depletion is exposing us to higher radiation levels and the cancers and other consequences of that exposure.

Rising temperatures are ushering in new tropical diseases and contributing to nearly 100 deaths a year in Montreal and Toronto alone.

The Canadian Medical Association has voiced strong support for Kyoto, as have other health advocates, with one notable exception: the federal Liberal health minister.

Alberta physicians are willing to risk their jobs to speak out for Kyoto, why is the health minister not?

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● (1410)

[*Translation*]

CENTRE INTÉGRÉ DES PÂTES ET PAPIER DE TROIS-RIVIÈRES

Mr. Yves Rocheleau (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the hard work, patience and in particular the perseverance of many people in the Mauricie area bore fruit this week when the federal government at last decided, close to a year and a half after the Government of Quebec's commitment, to pay its proper share of the funding for the Centre intégré des pâtes et papier de Trois-Rivières.

The CIPP is also funded by public Quebec bodies, namely the Cégep and the Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières, as well as the pulp and paper industry, and is of vital importance to our region and to Quebec as a whole. It will bring together under one roof not just R and D activities, but also training activities for the next generation of workers in this sector, which will in future require even more specialized labour.

The completion of this project, which is international in scope, represents the outcome of some great teamwork for all of us in Mauricie. I am particularly pleased that this week's announcement falls almost two years to the day on the date on which the regional mobilization campaign was begun, a campaign in which I played a proud and active role.

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[*English*]

CHARTERED ACCOUNTANT FIRMS

Mr. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in response to the recent events on the world financial markets, federal and provincial regulators and Canada's chartered accountants have created a new system to oversee the auditors of public companies in Canada. This new body will require that Canadian chartered accountant firms undergo frequent and rigorous inspections and implement tighter quality control requirements.

This is good news for all Canadians who place their trust and their investment dollars in the many firms from coast to coast.

The new public oversight system is a step forward in efforts to ensure Canadians receive accurate information on corporate performance. Canadians deserve the peace of mind of knowing that their hard-earned money is working for them.

I am pleased that Canadian companies are spearheading this initiative to protect Canadian investments.

* * *

SAFETY STANDARDS

Mr. Rex Barnes (Gander—Grand Falls, PC): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Transport is aware that 11 models of COSCO infant car seats fall short of government safety standards, 225,000 of these have been sold in Canada. These car seats fail to meet safety standards because they do not have sufficient padding around the child's head and neck. Its own investigation concluded that the car seats most likely caused the bruising that led to several complaints.

Oral Questions

Purchasers now open the box to find a repair kit.

If I buy a bicycle tire and included is a patch kit, I would assume that I would not need it until I had a hole in my tire. The difference here is there is already a problem and there is nothing in the box stating that this product can hurt a child if it is not properly repaired.

Why was there no recall when his department identified the threat? Why is it that Transport Canada seems more concerned with big corporations over the safety of our children? Will the government admit its mistake and demand an immediate recall of this product?

* * *

RENOVATION MONTH

Mr. Steve Mahoney (Mississauga West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to announce that October is Renovation Month, an annual Canadian Home Builders' Association event providing consumers with information on home renovations and showcasing the building industry's professionals and their products and services.

As Canada's national housing agency, CMHC supports this event and plays a key role in providing Canadians with important information regarding the many choices and decisions involved in renovating and maintaining their homes.

CMHC is the most reliable and objective source of housing information in Canada. This fall CMHC will help those who are planning renovations by providing them with free renovation information.

CMHC also funds a number of federal repair assistance programs for low income Canadians and is committed to helping improve the quality of life for Canadians in communities right across the country.

* * *

THOMPSON RIVER

Mrs. Betty Hinton (Kamloops, Thompson and Highland Valleys, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the Thompson River system has been a major navigational waterway for over 100 years. Recently, however, the Canadian Coast Guard has decided it will no longer take responsibility for the buoy markers and therefore the safety of local and visiting boaters on this important waterway.

The federal government has crippled the B.C. softwood lumber industry, abdicated its responsibility for native land claims and now it threatens tourism and local navigation by proposing to remove 114 navigation buoys.

My message to the minister is clear: Do not do it. This government neglect is putting lives and livelihoods at risk. That is the exact opposite of what a government should do.

* * *

•(1415)

[Translation]

LUCIEN AND GÉRARD BOUCHARD

Ms. Monique Guay (Laurentides, BQ): Mr. Speaker, with the presentation yesterday in Matignon of the Order of the Legion of Honour to Lucien Bouchard and Gérard Bouchard, France honoured

two men who have, throughout their careers, incarnated the reciprocal attachment between the people of Quebec and the people of France.

With great emotion and simple and heartfelt words, exactly as we who had the pleasure to serve with him here remember him, Lucien Bouchard responded to the honour bestowed upon him by saying that "an honour that comes from France goes straight to the heart, and makes it swell with pride".

A man of sincerity, whose determination and courage are out of the ordinary, this founder of the Bloc Québécois, this former Premier of Quebec, this citizen of Quebec and of the world, Lucien Bouchard, continues to do a splendid job of making Quebec's voice heard, while ably listening to what our interlocutors around the world have to say.

The other honouree, Gérard Bouchard, was recognized by the Government of France for his scientific accomplishments. Through his research, he has become one of the most influential and most appreciated of Quebec's supporters.

Congratulations to both Bouchards.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

ETHICS

Mr. Stephen Harper (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister fired the former minister of national defence for giving a contract to a friend, but he continues to defend the Solicitor General for doing the same thing. The government member for Nepean—Carleton says that this is a double standard. The government member for London North Centre says, "Why there's inconsistencies is rather baffling to me". The government's ethical standards are incomprehensible even to its own members.

My question is this. Does the Prime Minister stand by his decision to fire the former minister of national defence and will he do the same thing to the Solicitor General?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in the case of the former minister of defence there was an incident in the month of March that was complicated and this came up in the month of June. We received advice from the ethics counsellor that he had broken the guidelines. As he had broken the guidelines, I asked him to quit the cabinet. It was what I had to do.

In the case of the Solicitor General, I have not received such advice.

Oral Questions

Mr. Stephen Harper (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister cannot hide behind his own employee. He is supposed to come to the House of Commons and be responsible on this floor for his own decisions. That is why we have scandal after scandal. We have the minister from P.E.I. juggling a dozen different ethical hot potatoes. We have the minister from Hamilton creating a heritage of contracts for her friends. We have no proposals to deal with any of this from the Prime Minister or any of the would-be prime ministers over there.

I ask this again. When will the government bring in an ethics package and one that includes an independent ethics commissioner for the Prime Minister and his cabinet?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have guidelines that have been in use since I have been Prime Minister and there were guidelines on ministers before I was Prime Minister. We have always followed them. We have established a new institution. The government created the job of ethics counsellor. He has to talk to the press and counsel not only members of the cabinet but also members on all sides of the House. He has done his job. He has talked to the people. There was no such institution. Now there will be a bill on that.

With the experience we have had in the last seven years with this institution, there is always room for improvement and we will improve. I want to affirm again that it was the government—

The Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Stephen Harper (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, we have no ethics package. We have a government in total disarray in ethics. Not only does it not want to do what is right, it does not even know what is right. There are some Liberal members who want to go back to the old Tory rules, the old Sinclair Stevens exception for disclosure; just transfer assets to a spouse.

Will the Prime Minister commit to bringing in an ethics package where one cannot get around disclosure rules by transferring assets to a spouse?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the ethics counsellor was approved by the leader of the Reform Party—

Mr. Stephen Harper: No, he was not.

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien: Yes, he was, by the leader of the opposition of the day. We consulted with the opposition before he was named. Now they want to dismiss that. We will let him do his job. When he reports, we use it.

In terms of the conflict of interest for members of Parliament, we are acting on a report from a senator and the Speaker of the House that was prepared some years ago. I said yesterday it would go to a committee. The members will be able to argue and eventually a piece of legislation will be passed. We are preoccupied with that. We wanted to implement the report.

• (1420)

GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS

Mr. Kevin Sorenson (Crowfoot, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the plot thickens. We now know that Mr. Nicholson was a member of the Solicitor General's staff shortly before the contract was made with Mr. Roche's firm. Mr. Nicholson went from ministerial employee to being under contract with the minister's political pal's firm.

My question is for the Solicitor General. Was this transfer solely made to launder government funds through the firm of Mr. Roche, through the firm of this minister's political pal?

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I indicated a number of times in the House, Mr. Wilson is evaluating and reviewing the whole situation, and we are looking forward to his report.

Mr. Kevin Sorenson (Crowfoot, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the Solicitor General continually refuses to answer questions from the opposition. He refuses to face the media. Now he even refuses to answer questions from his very own backbench. Canadians are demanding answers.

Will the Solicitor General have the courage today to exit through the front doors and face the music or is he going to continue to slither out the back way?

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the opposition has an awful interest in my mode of transportation. The fact of the matter is, I have been dealing with the media more than probably any member of the House of Commons in the last week.

Last Friday I issued a statement to indicate exactly what took place. My hon. colleague is well aware, if he would just listen, that all was done under Treasury Board guidelines. It was publicly posted. We all know that.

Mr. Wilson is reviewing the facts. We should let him do his job.

* * *

[Translation]

TAXATION

Mr. Gilles Dupeppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, instead of acknowledging the obvious, the Prime Minister denies the existence of the fiscal imbalance and wrongly claims that the federal government is a better manager than the Government of Quebec.

Will the Prime Minister tell us what best illustrates his government's so-called good management? Is it the multiplication of social insurance numbers, funneling money from the employment insurance fund, the cuts that have been made on the backs of people with disabilities and seniors, or the sponsorships scandal?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very proud that we have gone from a \$42 billion deficit to successfully posting five surpluses in a row since.

The provincial governments have the same taxation powers as we do. What the Parti Québécois and the Bloc Québécois want is for us to collect the taxes, and for them to hand out the cheques.

Oral Questions

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, this is a Prime Minister who is proud that his government has reduced its contribution to health care to 14 cents from the 22 cents it was at when he came to power.

Is this the federal government's good management? Are cuts on the backs of the sick good management? He wants Quebec to make others pay for his problems, when he was the one, as Minister of Finance, who ran up appalling deficits in Canada.

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if the member were to look at the situation calmly, he would realize that the Government of Quebec spends less of its own money on health care than all the other provinces. Newfoundland, Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Ontario and Manitoba all spend more money per capita than the Parti Québécois government.

Mr. Pierre Paquette (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Prime Minister tried to hold himself up to the Quebec government as an example of a good manager of public funds. Since 1995, his government—

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

The Speaker: Order, please. The hon. members' enthusiasm is great, but we must be able to hear what the hon. member for Joliette is saying; he has the floor.

• (1425)

Mr. Pierre Paquette: Mr. Speaker, I was saying that, yesterday, the Prime Minister tried to hold himself up as an example. Since 1995—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: Preambles are always difficult to get in. The hon. member for Joliette. Perhaps he could put his question immediately.

Mr. Pierre Paquette: Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Prime Minister tried to hold himself as an example, but chose a poor one. Since 1995, his government has helped itself to \$42 billion in the employment insurance account. This is \$42 billion that belongs to the unemployed.

Does the Prime Minister call that good management? Is that what he expects from the provinces?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the employment insurance program is a plan into which workers pay, as do the government and employers as well.

When, under the Conservatives, the unemployment insurance program ran a deficit, the taxpayers were replenishing the UI account. Now that the economy is doing much better, there are surpluses, and a balance is being achieved. What the government paid in the past came out of the consolidated revenue fund.

So, the so-called EI surpluses belong in fact to the consolidated revenue fund.

Mr. Pierre Paquette (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister just gave us an example of poor management. He should know that the federal government has not put a cent into the employment insurance account for quite some time now.

Is the example the same when it comes to the mismanagement of SIN cards? Is that what he calls good management?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, obviously, we no longer need to pay into the account because unemployment has decreased. When unemployment was 11.5%, we did. Now that it is down to 7%, we do not anymore, and I hope we will not have to start paying again. That is why we continue to work for good economic conditions across the country.

* * *

[English]

KYOTO PROTOCOL

Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister as well.

Ten days from now federal and provincial environment ministers will meet in Halifax to map out Canada's Kyoto commitments. The government is the biggest landlord and operates the largest fleet of vehicles in the land. If the government were offering an ounce of leadership in Kyoto it would raise gas emission standards and retrofit its 68,000 buildings to make them more energy efficient. Those measures alone would deliver 20% on Canada's Kyoto commitments.

Why does it not lead by example? Why does it not become an energy efficient government? That would be leadership on Kyoto.

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to inform the leader of the NDP that we have had a government priority initiative underway for years. We are already at 1990 minus 20% and we are headed toward 1990 minus 30% within the Government of Canada.

Mr. Joe Comartin (Windsor—St. Clair, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have to say to the minister that if he knew his figures he would know that does not even cover 1/1,000 of the public buildings right now. The government has not even retrofitted those.

I want to go back to the Prime Minister. Unions representing workers across the country directly affected by the implementation of Kyoto, looking both at the automotive and the energy sectors, have developed a transition plan for a green economy. Almost 2.5 million Canadian workers are committed to making Kyoto work and they are ready to do it now.

Why is the Prime Minister and his government not ready now? Why will they not commit to government-wide energy efficiencies and do it now, not 10 years from now?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that is exactly what the minister said a minute ago. We are ahead and we are improving our own fleet so we can make a positive contribution to this problem.

I am very happy to see that the unions want to collaborate. I know the provinces will want to collaborate. I know that if all sectors of Canadian society want to collaborate we will attain the Kyoto goal of 2012 by having everybody committed to reducing the problem of CO₂ and climate change.

GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS

Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC): Mr. Speaker, the Solicitor General wanted his pet project, the Greenwich Interpretative Centre, completed by the spring of 2001. Contract difficulties between the government and the minister's Liberal friend, Tim Banks, threatened to delay that opening.

Banks has admitted to speaking personally with the minister over the problems and Parks Canada ended up paying an additional \$235,000 to Banks to ensure the centre opened on time. This is on top of the \$30 million that Banks stands to make on the deal.

Did the minister interfere in the process to help his friend, Banks, sweeten that sweetheart deal?

• (1430)

Ms. Sarmite Bulte (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to report that with respect to the \$235,000 that the hon. member questions, it was actually moneys that were paid by Parks Canada for actual changes that Parks Canada had requested.

Also, as the hon. member knows, if he looks at the total cost of the project and what the additional changes cost, it is less than 5% which is well below what is normal in the construction industry.

Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC): Mr. Speaker, I guess some fat cat has the minister's tongue.

Last week the ACOA minister said that the Greenwich development project was a very sound economic development. While Banks, the businessman, bargained hard, the regional minister rolled over and doled out.

Whose interests are being served when a who's who Liberal Party president can make \$30 million in rent from a \$3.5 million investment? Would the minister have us believe that this deal is in the best interests of P.E.I. and the Canadian taxpayers? I suggest the Auditor General join the ethics counsellor on the island this weekend. Answer that one, minister.

Hon. Gerry Byrne (Minister of State (Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there are a lot of good interests being taken care of. Let me read a little piece of correspondence that was sent to several stakeholders. It reads:

—let me acknowledge my pleasure that provincially owned lands transferred to the Federal Government are now part of the National Park system, and that development is occurring to provide the public the opportunity to interpret and appreciate the unique aspects of this landscape.

It goes on to say "we support the federal government".

It is signed by the Progressive Conservative premier of P.E.I., the hon. Pat Binns.

Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay—Columbia, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, when the Prime Minister appointed the Minister of Canadian Heritage to her office in 1996, at that time Joe Thornley and his firm had not received one single solitary Canadian heritage contract.

Joe Thornley was and is the heritage minister's campaign manager. Since 1996 Thornley has received over three-quarters of a million dollars in contracts from her department.

Oral Questions

Is it not clearly obvious why the Prime Minister needs an independent ethics commissioner to answer to Parliament?

Ms. Sarmite Bulte (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to advise the House that Heritage Canada did indeed follow all the prescribed contracting policies and procedures to acquire the communications services of Thornley Fallis Inc.

In fact, as the hon. member probably already knows, these services are provided via the department via a standing offer agreement which is actually put in place competitively through Public Works and Government Services Canada.

Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay—Columbia, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, what the Prime Minister and the government is saying is that they do not find it a little strange that he had not had one single solitary contract prior to 1996 until this heritage minister took over.

Let us look at his credentials. Thornley was and is the heritage minister's campaign manager. Thornley was former president of the Liberal youth. Thornley is now chair of the federal Liberal agency, which just shows that membership does have its privileges.

Why can the Prime Minister not understand that we need an independent ethics commissioner?

Ms. Sarmite Bulte (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I do not think the hon. member was listening. The contract was obtained through an open competitive process. It was done via Public Works and Government Services Canada, and it was also won on the merits.

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[Translation]

DELEGATIONS ABROAD

Ms. Francine Lalonde (Mercier, BQ): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Prime Minister ridiculed the role of Quebec's general delegations abroad. Yet, his own Minister for International Trade said that when he was in the private sector, he was very pleased when he dealt with Quebec's general delegations.

Before insulting Quebec, should the Prime Minister not ask those cabinet members who know whether what he is about to say makes sense, and should he not refrain from making such statements if they do not make sense?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there was a time when all the provinces had delegations abroad, including British Columbia, Saskatchewan and Ontario, which had many. These provinces decided to reduce their spending and to close their offices. When they need someone to represent them, they use the facilities provided by the federal Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade.

Quebec, however, has maintained its delegations and is spending over \$100 million annually for that purpose. It has the right to do so. But that same government spends less than any other government on health.

Oral Questions

● (1435)

Ms. Francine Lalonde (Mercier, BQ): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the hon. member for Verdun—Saint-Henri—Saint-Paul—Pointe Saint-Charles hastened to point out to the Prime Minister that Quebec's delegations are an illustration of Quebec's distinct nature.

Even though the Prime Minister boasts about having recognized Quebec's distinct nature in a resolution adopted by the House of Commons, is he not being blinded again by his contempt for Quebec, to the point where his own members and ministers have to call him to order?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I was in the House when that resolution was passed, and the contempt came from the Bloc Québécois, because its members refused to vote to support the resolution on a distinct society.

* * *

[English]

GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS

Mr. Charlie Penson (Peace River, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the Toronto Dominion chief economist, Don Drummond, has calculated how much the 22 spending promises from last week's throne speech will cost Canadian taxpayers. He says that it just simply will not work. He says that the government's lofty plans will not fit into the fiscal box the government has to work with.

Could the Prime Minister tell the House whether he has costed out his promises? Has he costed out these programs? Is he prepared to stand in the House today and tell Canadians how much they are going to cost?

Mr. Bryon Wilfert (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first I would say to the hon. member that this is the government that has gone from a \$42.5 billion deficit to back in the black. We have had five balanced budgets. When it comes to fiscal management and fiscal prudence, the government needs to take no lessons from the opposition.

I would point out that the Speech from the Throne has outlined a number of key initiatives of the government and we intend, through the budget process, to deliver in a timely and effective manner that Speech from the Throne.

Mr. Charlie Penson (Peace River, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, it is just like we thought, there is no plan. It is just like Kyoto, there is no plan. They are just bumbling ahead right into another boondoggle. That is where they are going.

Don Drummond was the assistant deputy minister to the former minister of finance. He says that these promises are too costly. He says that paying for it would risk falling back into a deficit position. He says that it would abandon any further debt payments.

Could the Prime Minister tell us just why the government will not bring down a fall budget to pay for these promises, for the Prime Minister's legacy?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are the only government in 50 years that has paid the national debt. We have reduced the national debt by \$45 billion since we have been here. We have balanced our books and we have said that we will do the Speech from the Throne within a balanced budget. We

have something to prove that because in the last five years we have shown the Canadian people that we can do these things.

When I listen in the House of Commons there is not one day when members on the other side do not ask for more spending on this and that. Every day they ask us to spend billions of dollars but, happily, we are not listening to them too much.

* * *

[Translation]

DELEGATIONS ABROAD

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ): Mr. Speaker, last February in Munich, Team Canada, under the leadership of the Prime Minister, enthusiastically opened a trade delegation for Ontario and Alberta, the entire cost of which, including rent, is being borne by those provinces.

Can the Prime Minister explain to us how it was that he was so delighted last February with the opening of the Ontario and Alberta trade delegations, when yesterday in this House he was ridiculing Quebec's general delegations at work all over the world?

Why is there always this double standard when it comes to Quebec?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what I said is that they work in conjunction with the Department of International Trade and the Department of Foreign Affairs. They make use of our facilities, and they do this to save money. That is not the option Quebec chose. They prefer to have their own delegations with their own buildings and all the rest, and that costs more money, so there is less for health.

● (1440)

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ): Mr. Speaker, when the Prime Minister was with Team Canada, the Premier of Ontario stated clearly that those provinces paid all the expenses of their missions, including rent to the Canadian embassies, and this the Prime Minister has never denied. He was there. So let him not try to put another version over on us today.

Since Ontario and Alberta have joined with Quebec in denouncing the fiscal imbalance that works to Ottawa's advantage, is the Prime Minister also going to advise them to close down their offices, as he has Quebec?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have explained that this is a government's choice. Other governments have decided that this was less of a priority and make use of facilities provided by the Canadian government. This is not what Quebec chose to do and they are entitled to their decision.

I am, however, aware that people, those in my riding for example, would like to see more money available for health, for maintaining emergency services that the government is not maintaining in Shawinigan; there are regular reports on this situation on Quebec television and in the Quebec press.

[English]

KYOTO PROTOCOL

Mr. Gary Lunn (Saanich—Gulf Islands, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the premier of Nova Scotia came out to say that his province's economy would be devastated by Kyoto. The minister knows the truth. It is a bad deal for Nova Scotia and a bad deal for Canada.

Why does the government not come clean and admit that it is planning to stuff Kyoto down our throats no matter how many provinces speak out and no matter how many Canadians it hurts?

Hon. David Anderson (Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would point out that the provinces that produce gas, as Nova Scotia does, are substantially advantaged by measures under the Kyoto agreement which encourages the use of low emission fuel over of course the higher emission fuel. The province of Nova Scotia, which is a gas producer and sells, I believe, over 90% of its gas to the United States, will be advantaged by the measures taken to reduce greenhouse gases.

Mr. Gary Lunn (Saanich—Gulf Islands, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the minister continues to babble about trading and all kinds of schemes that no one understands, but the truth is everyone worries about the environment.

Kyoto will not clean the air. It will not clean the water. It will not plant a single tree. With more and more provinces voicing their objections, will the minister simply can the accord? Yes or no.

Hon. David Anderson (Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member makes no effort to understand the agreement, I do not expect him to support it. That is fair enough, but I do think he should make an effort to understand it. He may not succeed, but I think it is possible.

All I can say is that we expect to have a plan to implement the Kyoto accord as outlined by the Prime Minister. We will have it in place. We will have it before the provinces because we want a made in Canada approach, every province and territory working with the federal government.

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FISHERIES

Hon. Charles Caccia (Davenport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans.

Given that aquaculture as it is currently practised poses serious threats to wild salmon stocks and the marine environment, and given the ill-advised lifting by the British Columbia government of the seven year moratorium on salmon farming, would the minister have the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans examine in depth the aquaculture industry, its environmental impacts and its economic and social future?

Hon. Robert Thibault (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for his interest in this matter and all the good research he has been doing.

Aquaculture holds a lot of potential for economic growth on all the shores of Canada. We have had a lot of very good work done by governments, federal and provincial, along with industry, to make sure we have safe aquaculture practices that are sustainable.

Oral Questions

I am very pleased with the work that has been done by the Senate Committee on Fisheries and the House Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans. They have worked on this for over three years, helping and participating in formulating our policies. I encourage them to keep up this work, specifically, looking into the regulations.

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TRANSPORTATION

Mrs. Bev Desjarlais (Churchill, NDP): Mr. Speaker, rail is the most energy efficient and environmentally friendly mode of travel. Federal support for rail service, including high speed rail in the densely populated area of the Quebec-Windsor corridor, could take 3 million vehicles off the road annually. That is 16.8 million tonnes less of CO₂ emissions annually.

My question is, if the government is truly committed to the Kyoto agreement, where is its vision? Where is its plan for revitalizing rail in Canada?

[Translation]

Mr. André Harvey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my colleague knows very well that when it comes to the enormous environmental challenges before us, every alternative scenario will be considered over the coming months. The government will be tabling a report on this issue.

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• (1445)

[English]

AGRICULTURE

Mr. Dick Proctor (Palliser, NDP): Mr. Speaker, parts of Alberta and Nova Scotia have just suffered through their worst drought in memory. For several years now each summer seems to be hotter and dryer than the previous one. This is causing additional uncertainty and confusion within the agriculture community.

Now we have the spectre of a new El Nino, but farmers are also concerned that Kyoto will increase their energy costs. My question is, what steps will the government take to ensure that the many benefits of Kyoto will be passed on to our farmers?

Hon. David Anderson (Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member has correctly pointed out the devastating impact of drought in many parts of Canada, in particular south central Alberta.

This is of course one of those extreme weather events which we can expect to be more frequent, to have longer duration and to have greater intensity because of climate change.

Oral Questions

It is important for us to attack and to deal with the causes of the problems of farmers in Canada that are related to extreme weather events, as well as of course carrying out other measures which can deal with short term effects or short term opportunities for taking care of immediate difficulty.

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CORRECTIONAL SERVICE CANADA

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester, PC): Mr. Speaker, we have now learned that Correctional Service Canada is training inmates to do telemarketing directly from Canada's prisons.

Corrections Canada is teaching inmates how to obtain information about Canadians' lives, their homes, their property, SIN numbers, credit cards, and bank account numbers. The potential for abuse is absolutely unlimited.

How can the minister justify subjecting Canadians to this crazy strategy?

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on the situation with the computers, Correctional Service Canada is doing a thorough assessment of inmate owned computers in their cells. CSC is doing a full review to make sure that they are used appropriately.

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester, PC): Mr. Speaker, this was not about computers. It was about telemarketing.

I would like the minister to explain why they have a policy of firing vocational teachers at prisons like Springhill, where there are 380 prisoners, while they are adding staff at Montague.

This telemarketing scheme is crazy. Will the minister immediately restore the funding to the facilities where the prisoners are?

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I indicated to my hon. colleague yesterday, the budget for the Addictions Research Centre in Montague comes from the national centre in Ottawa. No funds have come from Dorchester or any other institution in Atlantic Canada, but of course Correctional Service Canada is fully aware of how important it is to address the addiction problem.

The Speaker: Order. I note that today there seems to be an unusual amount of noise and catcalls in the House. I am sure that the members who are speaking appreciate the free advice they are receiving from other hon. members, but it makes it very difficult for the Chair to hear and somebody may say something out of order. I appeal for a little more order today in the House, especially since we now have the hon. member for Langley—Abbotsford on the floor.

Mr. Randy White (Langley—Abbotsford, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, if this fellow knew as much about the prison system as he does about fixing his friends up we would be better off in this country.

I am going to follow up on the previous question. Telemarketing schemes are not about computers in prisons. They are about phoning people at home from within the prisons.

I would like the Solicitor General to tell me why it is that Correctional Service Canada plans to expand that program and phone even more people at home on surveys to find out about their lives, their homes and their property. What gives?

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, offenders who are working at call centres are carefully screened before anybody is chosen to do this and they do not have any access to personal information.

Mr. Randy White (Langley—Abbotsford, Canadian Alliance): I told you, Mr. Speaker, that he did not know what he was talking about.

I do not know how an inmate can get on the phone and ask people about their families, their private lives and their property without having the information. Hello, get a life over there. This is a bad program. It spies into the privacy of Canadians. I want to know why it is not stopped.

• (1450)

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I indicated before, any inmate who is chosen to do the—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: Order. We have to be able to hear the answer from the Solicitor General. He has the floor.

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: Mr. Speaker, any offender who is chosen to do this is carefully screened, and the fact of the matter is that before an offender—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: Mr. Speaker, it is part of the CORCAN program in order to make sure that offenders are prepared to be returned to society. It is all done in the line of public safety.

[Translation]

The Speaker: The hon. member for Châteauguay.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

[English]

The Speaker: All my appeals for order seem not to be working. I know the member for Langley—Abbotsford did his very best to keep things quiet, but it is now the turn of the hon. member for Châteauguay.

[Translation]

The floor belongs to the hon. member for Châteauguay, and we would like to hear his question, please.

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GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS

Mr. Robert Lanctôt (Châteauguay, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Public Works and Government Services just tabled the report on the internal administrative investigation by his department into the sponsorships scandal.

How can the minister say that a public inquiry is not necessary for this affair, when the description of the mandate very clearly shows that the investigation was limited to administrative aspects of the program and did not touch in any way on the political involvement of the government?

Oral Questions

[English]

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the efforts that have been put underway by the government are covering every dimension of this aspect. There have been of course the internal audits and the audit implementation plan. Whenever there are questions that raise legal matters they are referred to the RCMP. The Auditor General will be conducting a government-wide audit and examination, plus there is an administrative review now under way under the Financial Administration Act. There are time verification audits with respect to certain firms. Every dimension of this issue is being properly investigated.

[Translation]

Mr. Robert Lanctôt (Châteauguay, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we see that very clearly. As long as the investigation is limited to the administration of the program, the sponsorship scandals are presented as mere administrative errors. However, there was a political will behind it all. This was confirmed by Chuck Guité and Alain Richard.

When will the government allow the truth to be known by authorizing an inquiry that is public, and more importantly, independent of the government?

[English]

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, again the hon. gentleman suggests the idea of a public inquiry, but I would suggest to him that in order to find the real facts of this matter, to thoroughly ventilate everything that went on, the most appropriate authorities to do that are, on the one hand involving legal matters, the RCMP, and on the other involving government activity and government policy, that would be the Auditor General. Both those authorities are fully engaged on this file.

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NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, in March 1997 the Minister of National Defence confirmed a longstanding promise to construct new living quarters at the emergency preparedness college in Arnprior, Ontario, buildings which date back to 1942.

After the 2001 budget, which provided \$396 million for Canada's emergency preparedness, the buildings for the student residences were demolished based on the government's promise that new ones would be constructed.

Where did the money for Arnprior's emergency preparedness college go?

Hon. John McCallum (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will look into this matter and report back to the member very soon.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the minister had better look very fast.

The top concern in Arnprior today is that the government has already dropped the bomb on the Arnprior emergency preparedness college and plans to tell employees tomorrow, right before Thanksgiving, that they are out of jobs and the government is planning to close that college down.

Will the minister confirm that the school in Arnprior will not be closed?

Hon. John McCallum (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will make no such promise or commitment at this time, but I will look into it this afternoon and get back to the member very soon.

* * *

● (1455)

HEALTH

Mr. David Pratt (Nepean—Carleton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health.

Recently the minister announced that the federal government would be contributing \$213 million to primary health care services across Ontario. In my riding of Nepean—Carleton this announcement was received with considerable enthusiasm, especially among some people who are very interested in primary health care reform.

Could the minister tell the House how this funding will be invested in Ontario?

Hon. Anne McLellan (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first let me say that I know that the hon. member has worked with his constituents in Nepean—Carleton around this important issue of primary health care reform.

I was pleased to be able to announce the \$213 million contribution from our primary health care transition fund for the province of Ontario. These dollars are going to be used to expand community based primary health care reform, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. In fact the Government of Ontario is working to expand this initiative across communities in the province.

I want to congratulate the hon. member because he and his constituents have—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Edmonton—Strathcona.

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CANADA CUSTOMS AND REVENUE AGENCY

Mr. Rahim Jaffer (Edmonton—Strathcona, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, for over a year the revenue minister has ignored the advice of customs agents. These agents are Canada's first line of defence, yet the minister refuses to give them the tools, like access to information, resources or firearms, to protect themselves, let alone Canadians.

Now our agents are fed up with the government's inaction and both our security and trading relations are in jeopardy.

Why will the government not give customs agents the tools they need to do their job?

Hon. Elinor Caplan (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to assure the member and the House that safety and security of Canadians is the number one priority for the government.

Business of the House

I also want to assure the member that customs officers do have the tools that they need in order to do their job. I am very proud of the role that they play.

We have a collective agreement in place. There is a grievance process under way right now. I would suggest to the member opposite that he not interfere in due process.

Mr. Rahim Jaffer (Edmonton—Strathcona, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I would suggest to the minister that she start doing her job and listen to the customs agents.

During the last two weeks Canadians have experienced delays at border crossings and trade has been slowed. Customs agents have voiced valid concerns over their workload and personal safety, yet these concerns have been ignored by the minister.

These problems have been caused by the mismanagement of customs by the Minister of National Revenue. When will the minister address these serious problems and allow customs agents to get back to the business of protecting Canadians?

Hon. Elinor Caplan (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the job action being carried out intermittently across the country is something which is of concern to me. I have met and discussed this with many customs officers across the country, but I want to inform the member and the House that there is a collective agreement and a grievance process.

That process is not complete and it is inappropriate for the member or anyone else to interfere in the due process the grievance process provides.

* * *

[Translation]

NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. Serge Cardin (Sherbrooke, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Government of Quebec has indicated its intention to sign with the federal government an administrative agreement similar to the one the latter has signed with Newfoundland and Nova Scotia for the development of offshore oil and gas resources in these two provinces.

Will the Minister of Natural Resources tell us whether he will commit to negotiating an administrative agreement with Quebec by the end of 2002, so that oil and gas exploration in the Gulf of St. Lawrence may begin in the spring of 2003?

[English]

Hon. Herb Dhaliwal (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have met with the minister of energy from Quebec. She has written to me. We are reviewing that and hopefully will have a response for her in the near future.

Of course we want to take advantage of every opportunity for economic development throughout the country, including this region, but we have to make sure that we have the regulatory framework in place. We have to deal with the jurisdictional problems at the same time.

REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Mr. John Harvard (Charleswood St. James—Assiniboia, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Secretary of State for Western Economic Diversification. Next week is community futures development corporations week.

These agencies do some great work. The trouble is that much of the public do not know it. Would the minister tell the House what benefits these organizations provide for western Canadians?

• (1500)

Hon. Stephen Owen (Secretary of State (Western Economic Diversification) (Indian Affairs and Northern Development), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am grateful for my hon. colleague's question. Community futures development corporations are located in 90 rural communities across western Canada.

They provide valuable business services to thousands of small and medium size enterprises each year. They take part in strategic implementation and planning of regional economic development.

There are volunteer boards in these 90 CFDCs. They are comprised of local volunteer businessmen and community leaders. They approved 13,000 loans over the last seven years of \$300 million, leveraging \$500 million more.

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CHILD PORNOGRAPHY

Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, we heard in the Speech from the Throne the government's promise to protect children from exploitation in all forms. Artistic merit now protects some child pornography and pornographers. This is simply wrong.

Would the justice minister commit here and now to introducing child pornography legislation that will eliminate totally the artistic merit from exemption and therefore protect our children as they should be?

Hon. Martin Cauchon (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have been following the Sharpe decision. We have been quite clear that we want to proceed with an extensive and thorough review of the offences that we have within the Criminal Code. Of course when we are talking about children in our society it is our top priority. We want to make sure to protect them.

We have some provisions as well. We have created under Bill C-15A, which is now legislation within the country, a brand new offence with regard to the use of the Internet. Lately, with the justice minister of Manitoba, we have launched a new site, Cybertip, which will be very useful for society. We will come forward with a brand new piece of legislation to keep protecting children within our communities.

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BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. John Reynolds (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, would the government House leader tell us the business for the rest of today, tomorrow and the first week we are back?

Business of the House

Would he also assure us that he will advise all his ministers not to make any statements outside the House in the break period so the House learns first what is happening from the Government of Canada?

Hon. Don Boudria (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, obviously the government will not stop functioning. It works all the time, seven days a week.

This afternoon we will continue with Bill C-4, the nuclear waste legislation. It will be followed by Bill C-2 respecting the Yukon and Bill C-3, if we have time available, respecting the Canada pension plan investment legislation.

Tomorrow shall be the sixth and final day of the address debate. This will result in a deferred vote until our return. Next week is a constituency week for all hon. members. When we return we will pick up the legislative agenda where we left off today. I will add that Bill C-14, the diamonds legislation, was introduced earlier today.

I should like to announce that the first allotted day shall take place on Thursday, October 24.

Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC): Mr. Speaker, with respect to the Thursday question, I note that this morning a number of members on the government side of the House were asking for more information about Kyoto before they vote to ratify.

Is the hon. House leader willing to provide time in government orders to permit the House to adopt Motion No. 82, standing in the name of the hon. member for Calgary Centre, to establish a joint committee of Parliament to get all the facts on Kyoto before the House votes on any ratification of Kyoto?

Hon. Don Boudria: Mr. Speaker, if my memory serves me correct, Motion No. 82 is a private member's motion. I am pleased to inform the member that there is a process for sorting out motions to determine which are debatable and subsequently those that are votable.

As the hon. member will know, the government never interferes in that process. Not only that, but we have free votes on private members' business as well, as the hon. member should know and perhaps will want to try from time to time.

Insofar as the government sponsored initiative on Kyoto, the Prime Minister has promised both in the throne speech and in the speech he delivered in the House that he is prepared to offer a debate and a vote in the House prior to the Christmas adjournment.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1505)

[English]

NUCLEAR SAFETY AND CONTROL ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-4, an act to amend the Nuclear Safety and Control Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Musquodoboit Valley—Eastern Shore, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we are debating the bill regarding our nuclear power concerns and earlier I was discussing the Kyoto ramifications.

The events concerning Dr. Swann in Alberta are quite unnerving, quite surprising and quite pleasing. He is a medical doctor who stated publicly his concerns and support for the Kyoto accord. He sees firsthand the climate change concerns of his patients.

He was summarily removed from his position. We still do not have clear satisfactory answers as to why it happened. We could only speculate that his removal from that office was because of political interference from the provincial government of Alberta.

We know that Mr. Klein, the premier of Alberta, stated his case very clearly that in no way, shape or form does he want Kyoto ratified. To stop or not even to allow dissenting opinions within the public service of Alberta when it comes to a medical doctor, for example, is simply unconscionable. It should never be allowed in the country or allowed to happen again.

We are quite pleased that the hospital board reinstated Dr. Swann, but he will now have a tainted relationship with his employer, the board and the provincial government. It is a sin that this happened.

If we were serious about having a full and open debate on any aspect of Kyoto and nuclear power we would be able to do it without fear of retribution. We must be able to state our case for, against or whatever. That is why the House of Commons is so important, so that we can have the exchange and debate of ideas.

Our public services, be they federal, provincial or municipal, should also have the ability to express their opinion on various issues facing the country. They should not live in fear that their jobs are at stake. We have other examples of the federal health department and other instances of that happening.

When someone with the reputation of Dr. Swann of the medical profession of Alberta stated very clearly his support for the Kyoto accord, the Alberta government should have said that it may disagree and it would continue on its path. To remove him from his position was simply unbelievable.

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BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Hon. Don Boudria (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I apologize for interrupting the hon. member. We have tentatively arrived at an agreement on a motion that I should now like to offer to the House. I understand that a number of members want it with before they leave the Chamber.

There has been consultation among all House leaders and I would like to propose the following motion. I move:

That, notwithstanding any Standing Order or usual practice:

1. The Standing Committee on Finance and the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade may hold organizational meetings on October 21, 2002; and that the membership of the said committees be as follows:

Government Orders

Members of the Standing Committee on Finance: Sue Barnes, Scott Brison, Rick Casson, Roy Cullen, Nick Discepola, Albina Guarnieri, Richard Harris, Rahim Jaffer, Sophia Leung, Joe McGuire, Hon. Maria Minna, Hon. Lorne Nystrom, Pierre Paquette, Charlie Penson, Pauline Picard, Gary Pillitteri, Tony Valeri and Bryon Wilfert;

Members of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade: Sarkis Assadourian, Stéphane Bergeron, Aileen Carroll, Bill Casey, Irwin Cotler, Stockwell Day, John Duncan, Hon. Art Eggleton, Mark Eyking, John Harvard, Marlene Jennings, Francine Lalonde, Hon. Diane Marleau, Keith Martin, Patrick O'Brien, Deepak Obhrai, Bernard Patry and Svend Robinson.

2. During the period ending December 10, 2002, there shall be seven allotted days pursuant to Standing Order 81;

3. During its consideration of proceedings pursuant to Standing Order 83.1, the Standing Committee on Finance, together with any necessary staff, may travel within Canada and may authorize the broadcasting of its proceedings.

For the benefit of members the motion provides for an additional allotted day. The lists of the associate members of the two committees will be tabled later.

• (1510)

The Speaker: Does the hon. government House leader have the unanimous consent of the House to propose the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Speaker: The House has heard the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

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NUCLEAR SAFETY AND CONTROL ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-4, an act to amend the Nuclear Safety and Control Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Musquodoboit Valley—Eastern Shore, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the federal Liberal government is at fault for not clearly explaining the positive aspects of Kyoto or even, as some people may say, the negative aspects of Kyoto. This deal was done five years ago. The government had five years to get the information out to all Canadians so they could make informed decisions on what this deal would mean to the long term future of Canada and its economy. The Alliance Party and Canadians are correct to raise concerns about that.

After looking at the Kyoto agreement myself, I firmly believe it is minimum at best as to what we should do as a country. I am very encouraged that many individuals and businesses have taken it upon themselves to retrofit their buildings, to reduce their greenhouse gasses and to reduce their energy export.

It is imperative that Canadians be informed. This has to happen. I agree with a full and open debate prior to Kyoto being ratified. That is why we would like get that debate going now, so we can move on this issue and move toward a much better society in terms of a cleaner and healthier Canada, as well as a cleaner and healthier environment.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Paquette (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the member for his presentation, even though it was

interrupted several times. As we know, Bill C-4 seeks to amend one particular section.

Previously, subsection 46(3) read, and I quote:

—any other person with a right to or interest in, the affected land or place take the prescribed measures to reduce the level of contamination.

That is a place that might be contaminated.

The bill would replace this excerpt by the following:

—any other person who has the management and control of, the affected land or place take the prescribed measures to reduce the level of contamination.

This change would exempt a whole group from its obligation to decontaminate. For instance, under the proposed new wording of the act, a bank that had granted a loan to a firm could not be taken to court.

Does the member think it is appropriate to amend the existing act with this bill?

• (1515)

[English]

Mr. Peter Stoffer: Mr. Speaker, a couple of lines above that it says the commission may or may not. In reality the commission may not do anything but just let it happen. It should say the commission shall impose that. However, when it says may, then it is up to the commission to decide whether it wants to do anything. I am not a lawyer, but I have it on sound advice from my colleague from Windsor, who is a lawyer, that the word shall would strengthen the bill completely.

Again it boils down to a matter of trust and confidence. Do we in the opposition, and for that matter many Canadians, have the trust and confidence in the Liberal government to do the right thing when it comes to the situation of a catastrophic problem with a nuclear power plant, or contamination of surrounding grounds or the downsizing or removal of a power plant?

We know that it is extremely expensive to get involved in this type of discussion. Who will pay for it? Who will be ultimately responsible for the clean up in the event something happens?

We saw other examples where a business had a serious problem and left its responsibility. Who was left to clean it up and take control of it? The government. Then that falls upon the taxpayer, and their dollars are expended to remedy the situation. That is simply unacceptable.

Mr. David Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member asked if we could trust the government and I would suggest that we cannot. This is the same government that intends to jail Canadian farmers in less than three weeks for trying to market their own grain.

I want to come back to a point that he made earlier. He said that workers were supporting this agreement. The reason they are supporting it is that they do not know what the agreement holds. The more people find out about it, the more concerned they are.

Government Orders

My concern is mainly over agricultural issues. I want to refer to one of the only studies on Kyoto and agriculture that we could find. It was conducted by the American Farm Bureau Federation. We had to go to the United States to find any information. Absolutely nothing has been done in Canada on the effects of Kyoto on agriculture. It suggests that Kyoto would increase farm expenses by up to 32%, depress annual farm income by 24% to 48%, diminish agricultural exports and put many farmers out of business. In fact, this study called the Kyoto protocol the single biggest public policy threat to the agricultural community today.

The members represent a party that calls itself democratic. I am unsure as to why they would be in favour of an agreement that would be so devastating to agriculture. These questions need to be answered. What will be the impact of higher energy prices? How many farmers will that put out of business? What will be the impact of non-implementing countries that we have to compete against? How will the protocol mechanism affect farmers?

I am a little uncertain as to why his party would take a position that is so aggressively against agriculture and farmers?

Ms. Paddy Torsney: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. It has come to my attention through the projected order of business and the notification that we all have on our desks that the House is debating Bill C-4, an act to amend the Nuclear Safety and Control Act, put forward by the Minister of Natural Resources.

I am quite happy to have a debate on Kyoto, but we are supposed to be having a debate on the Nuclear Safety and Control Act. I am not sure how that relates to farm issues and Kyoto, although I certainly get the relationship between extreme weather and drought and the implications of Kyoto. Could get the House back on topic?

[Translation]

Mr. Réal Ménard: Mr. Speaker, I would like to bring to your attention the fact that our colleague is wrong in thinking that we should not talk about Kyoto while debating the bill before us.

The bill before us deals with energy as a whole. Energy is linked to Kyoto. Why is it linked to Kyoto? Because in Kyoto there is a firm commitment on the part of Canada to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Therefore, we must talk about Kyoto and the House should reaffirm the due diligence the government should exercise in order to ratify Kyoto as quickly as possible. We sense a lack of resolve on the government side. However, I want to convince you that the links between the bill before us and Kyoto are not only relevant but unavoidable.

• (1520)

The Speaker: I appreciate the contributions of all members to this issue. Of course, when we are debating a bill, our comments should refer to that bill and not to anything else. Some may argue that a debate on the Kyoto protocol has something to do with Bill C-4.

[English]

However I am not going to engage in that argument. We have heard the submissions of hon. members. I know that in their debates members will want to discuss the merits or otherwise of Bill C-4 which is before the House today and try to make their remarks

relevant to that bill, as I am sure the hon. member for Sackville—Musquodoboit Valley—Eastern Shore is about to do.

Mr. Peter Stoffer: Mr. Speaker, let me make it nuclear clear to the member from the Alliance party. It was his party that voted against the Crow rate subsidization. It was his party that voted against every assistance package to farmers between 1993 and 1997. One of those people is now the leader of the Saskatchewan party. That is the Alliance record when it comes to help for agriculture and farmers.

Having said that, I know the member is very concerned about his farmers and agricultural producers. He has every right to be, and good for him. However the member for Palliser, our agriculture critic, has also done yeoman's work in bringing the issues of farmers and farm families to the attention of the country.

The broader question is whether we trust this government, and that is a very good question. The government has had five years to discuss the Kyoto plan. It has had many years to deal with nuclear safety and it simply has not done that. When people who are either for it or against it ask questions or if they are ask questions just to find out more information, they are stonewalled.

It is unfortunate that the member had to go to the United States to get his information. He quoted a bunch of statistics but we would have to question from where those statistics came. What kind of study was done? What did they base it upon? That is something we need to discuss even further. He is absolutely correct that the government is derelict in its responsibility of explaining what we would consider the benefits of the package.

He also mentioned the fact that many workers in organizations through unions, such as the CEP, have ratified the proposal for Kyoto. The member said the reason why they did was because they did not understand it. Fifteen hundred CEP members recently held their convention. There are some pretty intelligent people who are part of that organization. To say to them that they did not understand what they were voting on would be naive at best.

The CEP is a very good organization and union and it has done an awful lot of good in representing its workers and in working with business and government to look after the benefits for workers and their families in communities across the country, and I support that. I know under careful reflection my great colleague from the Alliance party would do the same as well.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Paquette (Joliette, BQ): Madam Speaker, the legislation before the House is Bill C-4, An Act to amend the Nuclear Safety and Control Act.

Government Orders

In dealing with nuclear energy and every aspect of its regulation, we also deal with the choices we make as a society in terms of the energy sources we use as fuel to carry out our economic activities. When we talk about energy resources, we are talking not only nuclear energy, but also about hydro power. We are talking about renewable energy sources, like coal. We are talking about energy resources of all kinds. So, of course, we have to talk about the need to ratify Kyoto. It would be the first step to take.

The bill amends the Nuclear Safety and Control Act to vary the classes of persons that the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission may order to take measures to reduce the level of contamination of a place.

As I mentioned earlier, when putting a question to a member, the bill stipulates that the commission may, and I quote:

—order that the owner or occupant of, or any other person with a right to or interest in, the affected land or place take the prescribed measures to reduce the level of contamination.

The wording, “any other person with a right to or interest in the affected land or place”, is quite broad. This is the situation at this time and thus funders could be held responsible, should the owner or the person in control of a place become insolvent, for decontaminating a place contaminated by nuclear activity, whether by waste or by the activity as such.

We believe this is appropriate, not only for the owners and persons in control of a place who use this form of energy, but also for all those who take the risk of investing in that form of energy. We believe the amendments proposed in the bill are not relevant. The bill would replace the words:

—any other person with a right to or interest in the affected land or place take the prescribed measures to reduce the level of contamination

by the following words:

—any other person who has the management and control of, the affected land or place take the prescribed measures to reduce the level of contamination.

Under the bill, a whole category of corporations and persons who, at this time, have obligations under the Nuclear Safety and Control Act, would no longer have those obligations. As I said earlier, as matters now stand, the commission could compel a bank that has loaned money to a business that is unable, by reason of insolvency, to decontaminate its site, to do so. With Bill C-4, the bank would not have to bear that responsibility, and we do not believe this is appropriate.

We support the intent of the bill, namely that nuclear energy involves an extremely high risk. The natural resources minister recognized it himself when he introduced his proposal. He said that it is intended to exclude funders from the categories of persons who could be asked by the commission to decontaminate a place or a land, because those people would probably not want to take the risk of investing in businesses that own or operate nuclear plants, considering the high risks involved in nuclear energy. We do not see why those investors, who are aware of the risk, should be exempted from their responsibilities in terms of decontamination.

It bears repeating that nuclear energy should be dropped. Obviously, that cannot be done overnight. In Ontario, for example, it is an extremely important source of energy. Quebec has long

stopped building nuclear plants. We realized that it was not only dangerous, but that it also produced an enormous amount of waste. Besides, there are other much more attractive alternatives. More on that later.

The minister is aware that nuclear energy involves great risks and wants to exempt some investors from their responsibilities so that they protect their assets.

● (1525)

The minister himself admits that nuclear energy is dangerous. Instead of turning to other less dangerous energy sources, the only solution he can think of is to let the investors walk away from their responsibilities. It is totally unconscionable.

The dangers of nuclear energy are well known. I do not need to remind the House all the disasters of the last few decades. As the minister himself said, investors would end up with an unknown financial risk that could be way out of proportion with their business interest.

If that is the case, they should not invest in nuclear projects. Why do I say that? If investors do not pay for decontamination, and if the company or owner cannot do it either because he has gone bankrupt or absconded, as has occurred, why should society pick up the tab for a private investment?

We are in a situation where the profits would be private, but the costs would be public. It is not appropriate for a responsible government to take away the responsibility of private investors with regard to a source of energy that presents unknown risks, to use the words of the minister. Therefore, we cannot support the passage of this bill. We think that the rules governing nuclear safety should be tightened, which is certainly not what Bill C-4 does.

I repeat, if this kind of investment is too risky for the private sector, why would society have to take that risk? If potential investors, having assessed the costs and the benefits from a financial and an economical point of view, believe that the investment is too risky for them and decide not to invest, maybe certain projects will not get off the ground because they are just not financially viable. Everyone will be better off in terms of safety and in terms of energy choices.

As I mentioned earlier, the Bloc Québécois opposes this bill. However, we do think that the debate on Bill C-4 is an ideal opportunity to reflect on development and on the energy choices that were made by the federal government in the past. It is clear that the decision to go nuclear was made around the 1970s, when we went through two successive oil crises.

Government Orders

Members will remember that in 1973 and 1974, we saw a first hike in oil prices. The Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries, OPEC, had been created a few years earlier, but it understood that, by acting as a cartel, it could get much higher prices for this non-renewable resource. That is what became known as the oil rent, which led to the creation of what became known as petrodollars, which are also the cause of the huge debts of third world countries.

At some point, these countries, and particularly a number of extremely small Arab countries, found themselves with this financial windfall and tried to reinvest this money. This is where we saw western banks reinvesting these dollars from oil production—which have been called petrodollars—by lending them to developing countries, which, unfortunately, were not able to meet their financial obligations. The crisis that we are currently in, the foreign debt of a number of developing countries, is due in large part to this first sharp rise in oil prices in 1973.

This is a first concern, especially because Quebec had been forced, with the Borden line, to pay western prices for its oil, to make the Leduc oil fields economically viable.

• (1530)

Also, because of this first oil crisis, the federal government realized that we were not independent enough in this regard. So it started to do some research on oil sands. And in order to be able to create an environment that would make these projects viable, it forced eastern Canada, Quebec in particular, to pay far more for its oil than it would have paid if it had gone directly to the international market. So, Quebec paid in large part for the development of the oil industry in western Canada, and the same is also true, I must say, for the Atlantic provinces.

So, there was a first oil crisis in 1973. The government realized that oil was a non renewable resource. At that time, there were all kinds of scenarios. Some said that there would be an oil shortage in 2001, that prices would be around \$90 per barrel. So alternatives were developed, as well as the nuclear energy alternative, which spread in Europe and in some parts of North America.

Quebec made different choices and, among others, it opted for hydroelectricity, following some heated debates. The James Bay project was not a minor venture. Some very important debates took place regarding this choice, because it was obviously going to inconvenience people living in northern Quebec.

I clearly remember the days when people wore T-shirts saying “Stop à la Baie James”—that was before Bill 101; now they would probably read “Arrêt à la Baie James” with a red hand—to protest against the development of a hydroelectric project that is now seen as a bonanza for Quebec.

So, the first oil crisis occurred in 1973, and it triggered an interest in nuclear energy. The second oil crisis came in 1979. That was during the Islamic revolution in Iran, which provided another opportunity for the OPEC cartel to jack up the price of this non-renewable product. It was then that choices were made all over the world regarding nuclear energy.

As we know, the price of oil has now gone down and it is compatible with the economic activity. Currently, we are talking

about \$23, \$24 or \$25 a barrel. It goes without saying that should the United States do something irresponsible in Iraq, there would be a sudden albeit temporary increase in the price of oil. However, because of all the efforts that were made to promote energy conservation, we now know that there is a future for this non-renewable resource, which allows us to work, not be careless and do nothing, but to work on energy alternatives.

Almost every country has agreed that nuclear energy is not the solution. We know that Germany, which is one of the countries that currently makes the greatest use of nuclear energy, has committed to completely eliminate the use of that form of energy in the coming decades. This shows that it can be done. Hopefully, France will follow Germany's example.

As for Canada, it seems to me that, given all our natural resources, we have the capacity to develop alternative energies and that we should completely rule out the development of the nuclear industry.

In this regard, Bill C-4 is not clear, because it sends the wrong message. It hints that nuclear energy, or the use of nuclear energy for production and economic activities, may be a worthwhile option for Canadians and Quebecers.

I for one think that the government should state very clearly that the nuclear industry is something we will try to drop, and, if some people still want to experiment with nuclear energy, let them do so at their own risk, financially speaking, provided they do not endanger people and communities in the areas where they build their plants.

Bill C-4 goes directly against the present trend in the west, which is to drop nuclear energy for alternative energies.

Canada still has good oil reserves. Clearly, using them is a problem, in terms of greenhouse gas emissions. And we have the Kyoto accord, which Canada cannot afford not to ratify. It is also obvious that we have hydroelectricity in Quebec and elsewhere in Canada, like Labrador and other places, where this source of energy should be the preferred option.

• (1535)

We have to wonder what the federal government has done. Since the early 1970s—members will recall Pierre Elliott Trudeau's energy policy, which was not very popular in western Canada, but that was nevertheless the choice made by this House at the time—efforts have been made to develop energy self-sufficiency. Oddly enough, when we take stock of the situation nearly 30 years after starting to look into our energy self-sufficiency, we realize that the federal government has consistently made the wrong choices.

It did so because it concentrated more on its political interests than on the interests of the people of Canada and of Quebec. With Bill C-4, I believe it is still on the wrong track.

Government Orders

Let me quote figures that should be thought provoking. For instance, between 1970 and 2000, the federal government invested \$66 billion in oil production. It has now been established that oil burning is largely responsible for greenhouse gas emissions. By comparison, \$6 billion was invested in nuclear energy, and \$329 million in renewable energies. This shows the disproportionate choices made by the federal government.

At first, oil development in western Canada was given greater importance. Also, it must be recognized that the Hibernia project alone, in Newfoundland, cost the federal government \$3.8 billion in all sorts of subsidies, loan guarantees and interest assistance loans. Hibernia was the last megaproject to be implemented. It was completed just a few years ago.

Since 1970, \$66 billion has gone to the oil industry, nothing to hydroelectricity, and nothing or nearly nothing to wind power, even though it is an extremely promising energy source. I mentioned Germany earlier. Not only did Germany ban the operation of nuclear plants in the next few decades—it has put a plan in place—but it is the first western country to rely on wind power. Approximately 35.8% of the energy produced in Germany is produced using wind generators.

Using wind to produce energy is definitely not some fad borrowed from some recycled 1970s hippies. Thought should also be given to solar energy, as a matter of fact.

Even in the United States, not a country to be held up as a model in terms of energy choices—as we all know—17.3% of the energy is wind-generated. It is not that hard to see in all of this a very promising way to generate energy and ensure safety. All members would agree that it is not as dangerous as a nuclear plant. Environmentally, it also creates fewer problems than a nuclear plant. The Americans currently use wind power to generate 17.3% of their energy.

Spain, a country not known as a leader in many areas, uses the wind to generate 13.6% of its energy.

In Canada, only 0.8% of our energy is wind-generated. In this area, we have fallen way behind. Not only can wind power be safe and meet a lot of our energy needs, but it can also create jobs. I will come back to these issues some other time.

Because of all these reasons and because of the risks associated with nuclear energy, we believe that, if private investments are made, the risks should be taken on by the private backers. Measures found in the current Nuclear Safety and Control Act should not only be maintained, but they should be strengthened.

● (1540)

The federal government should focus on clean energy sources, like hydro power, wind power, and even solar energy, instead of disproportionately investing in the nuclear industry and the oil industry as it is currently doing. I am not saying that the government should drop the oil industry, because the battery-powered car is still not ready, but it should not invest in it as much as it is doing right now.

The first step to solve all of our energy problems would be to ratify Kyoto.

[English]

Mr. Joe Comartin (Windsor—St. Clair, NDP): Madam Speaker, I commend my colleague from the Bloc for an excellent speech on the issues that are confronting us around this bill and more generally around the use of energy in this country. I am not sure if the House is aware of this but the issue is about limiting the liability to financiers of nuclear power plants, which is what the bill would do.

At least a dozen years ago we had the Vienna convention. In that period of time the international community came together and determined that if there were a nuclear meltdown and contamination, which generally would go out into the surrounding communities, it would cost a minimum of \$600 million.

As I think we have heard a couple times through the debate today, Canada has set the maximum liability that managers and operators of nuclear power plants have at \$75 million. That is the most insurance that they have to carry.

The other point I want to make is that the \$600 million was set some time ago. The estimates I am hearing now from the international community is that the amount could be more like \$1 billion to \$5 billion if there were a nuclear accident.

Does my friend from the Bloc think that it is sensible for the government to limit the liability that operators, owners and financiers of nuclear power plants have as opposed to perhaps extending that liability so they, as operators, would be more responsible for the cost should an accident ever occur?

● (1545)

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Paquette: Madam Speaker, I thank the member for his question.

I think he has put his finger on the fundamental issue in Bill C-4, which is designed to relieve some of the groups involved in a nuclear energy project of their responsibilities. Bill C-4 proposes to relieve these groups of their responsibilities when we know that these responsibilities are in fact quite limited. In the case of a nuclear catastrophe, some of those groups would simply declare bankruptcy, leaving society to deal with the aftermath.

We all know how strong the major Canadian banks investing in those projects are and it seems to me that society would be well served if those financial backers could be forced to meet their obligations under the current legislation.

In general, this bill sends a very bad signal to all investors, indicating that there could be a future for nuclear energy in Canada and in Quebec. I think that we have to be very clear. The nuclear approach has no future. This holds true in Canada as well as in Europe and we hope to be able to help the developing countries to get rid of this calamity. Generation after generation of people will have to live with the consequences of the irresponsible energy choices made.

I think that we share with the New Democratic Party the wish that Parliament will vote against Bill C-4.

Government Orders

Mr. Réal Ménard (Hochelaga—Maisonneuve, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like to ask my colleague three short questions.

He is very knowledgeable in economic matters. Can he remind us of the deterioration of terms of trade theory? I think this is very pertinent to the whole reality of the reinvesting of petrodollars and of the debt taken on by third world countries.

Second, can he tell us why it is so important for Canada to ratify the Kyoto protocol and to provide for territorial objectives so that each province can do its share?

Third, does he share my opinion that the best thing that could happen to this Parliament would be for this bill to be withdrawn?

Mr. Pierre Paquette: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Hochelaga—Maisonneuve, whom I have known for a long time. I like to remind this House that he was my student at the Collège Maisonneuve a few years ago. If there is anyone in this House who can say whether or not my courses were good, he can. I will start with his last question.

Indeed, I think that this bill should be withdrawn. It is totally irresponsible for the government to introduce such a bill. It even goes against the recent historical trends. What are we going to look like internationally if we take away the responsibilities of lenders who invest in projects related to the nuclear industry, an industry that everyone is abandoning? We will look like dinosaurs. Unfortunately, we know what happened to dinosaurs; they disappeared.

If the government were paying attention to what is going on in the world, it would withdraw this bill and put more energy into the ratification of the Kyoto Protocol. Instead of introducing legislation like Bill C-4, which is somewhat of a waste of time since it is dealing with something which will no longer be an option a few years from now—I am not talking in terms of decades, I clearly said that nuclear energy is being abandoned in all industrialized countries—we should take more time to discuss the Kyoto protocol. The Prime Minister told us there would be a vote on this issue before the Christmas recess. This protocol is extremely important. Some members in this House, including some Liberals, still have reservations about the importance of the protocol. We know that some members of the Canadian Alliance also have reservations about it.

We could have used this time to explore the implications of the Kyoto protocol and such things as how to share the costs. Indeed, there will be costs but let us be clear; there will also be benefits. I mentioned wind energy but the same can be said about some other soft renewable energies. Those kind of energies generate many more jobs than non-renewable energies such as oil, or renewable energies which present a serious safety threat, such as nuclear energy.

We should ratify the Kyoto protocol and agree that cost sharing be done on a territorial basis, taking into account the choices made by various provinces. As a Quebecker, I am not responsible for the fact that, in the 1970s, under the leadership of Pierre Elliott Trudeau, the federal government promoted nuclear power and oil. As I said, this was not an easy debate. The Government of Quebec could have taken the easy way out and refused to convince Quebeckers of the relevancy of hydro-electric power. By the way, René Lévesque played an extremely important role in this choice made by Quebec.

Furthermore, the federal government did not invest a single penny in the development of hydro-electricity in Quebec. Quebeckers footed the entire bill.

As I said before, as consumers, with the Borden Line, we paid for the development of the oil industry in western Canada. We also paid for our energy choice, hydroelectricity, and we should pay for the costs that it has created in the rest of Canada. We need to be extremely clear. We must ratify the Kyoto protocol and quickly agree on the sharing of costs and benefits at the jurisdictional level and certainly not at the sectorial level.

I could go on and on about oil refinery closures in Montreal in the 1970s because of the choices made by the federal government, particularly with regard to the national energy policy. However, I will stop here because I would not want to offend certain people by raising issues that may be a bit too far removed from Bill C-4.

Now, regarding the deterioration in the terms of trade, it is an extremely broad question. I mentioned earlier how the oil price shock produced what became known as petrodollars. These petrodollars were reinvested by large western banks, which made loans to third world countries without much regard for the consequences. Some of these third world countries did not make good use of this money. For example, some bought nuclear weapons or other kinds of weapons from certain western countries.

● (1550)

These countries found themselves in debt—and I think that we must be very clear here—at a time where, with new technologies and new economic developments, we are moving toward an economy that will rely less and less on natural resources. We are talking about the dematerialization of economic activity.

This explains why the terms of trade have deteriorated while the debt of third-world countries has increased. Canada is also a victim of that. We must realize that the decline in the Canadian dollar is due in large part to the fact that our natural resources—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member. Unfortunately, 10 minutes go by fast. The hon. member for Windsor—St. Clair.

[*English*]

Mr. Joe Comartin (Windsor—St. Clair, NDP): Madam Speaker, I must say that I was enjoying the comments of my friend from Joliette so much that I would not mind letting him go on, but I know that we are all limited to time.

It was interesting to listen to the minister as he introduced the bill this morning. As we saw in its previous incarnation, he continued with the suggestion and the spin that this is not much of a bill, that it is a very minor amendment, that it is no big deal; let us just get it done, get it through the House and committee, and get it passed. That is being quite disingenuous to the House because the bill has some very significant ramifications.

Government Orders

It is really about the Liberal government getting into bed with the Ontario Conservative government because of a big mistake that both levels of government, and I suppose the nuclear industry, made a year and one-half to two years ago. This was all about the Ontario Conservative government deciding to privatize nuclear power. It had already been working extensively on privatizing energy across the province from a number of different sources in advance of this.

They entered into a very favourable contract with Bruce Power and British Energy which would allow that company to operate the Bruce nuclear power plant up near Kincardine on Lake Huron. They started this by that contract and British Energy took over the operation of the plant.

The plant has eight nuclear reactors, four of which are operational and four of which are not and which are in a mothballed state. When they began to look at reopening the four mothballed nuclear reactors, which is what they want to do, they had a substantial need for new financing. They entered into some agreements with regard to that new financing. Only when the tentative contract was placed before their lawyers was it drawn to their attention that the Nuclear Liability Act exposed the financiers to the potential of liability should an incident take place at that plant.

The existing section which the bill proposes to amend talks about a number of categories of persons who would be responsible. The part that catches them is where it says "any person with a right to or interest in". As far as the law is concerned, that would include someone who is financing one of the plants. The bill proposes to remove that verbiage which I just read and replace it with a reference to only those people who have the management and control of the plant.

When they discovered that verbiage, the financial interests backed off. They said they would not go ahead as it exposed them to too much liability. Given the power the nuclear industry has in this country, a number of governments, the federal government in particular and the Prime Minister, are the salespeople for the Candu reactor around the world. They have been pushing that type of energy. The nuclear industry immediately went to its friends and said the government had to get the section changed.

Last spring we were faced with a big push by the government to respond to the government's friends in the nuclear industry to get this amendment through the House. To the credit of my party and the Bloc Québécois, we blocked it at that point but it is now before us once again.

• (1555)

It would be interesting to take another quick look at what has happened to privatization in Ontario because we could learn some lessons. What happened specifically with Bruce Power is that in late August or early September it came to the government's attention that Bruce Power may not be in a position to meet the regulatory requirements regarding posting a bond to continue to maintain its responsibility should there be a nuclear incident, or that it does not meet the regulatory requirements of safety, et cetera.

Only after the government in England bailed out the British company was the British company able to continue its guarantees to the Ontario company. That is the type of tentative and soft

arrangements that protect citizens of this province and country in terms of proper regulations and safety mechanisms. It was that tentative. It almost collapsed in late August.

We have heard a number of speakers say that we have to do this, that it is not fair to the nuclear industry if we impose this liability. It is important to appreciate that this liability has been in existence since the 1970s when the legislation was first passed and became law.

A number of examples could be given to show that this is no different in its practical application than what would happen if a person bought a piece of property. In fact one of the parliamentary secretaries used that as an example. He was about to buy a piece of property and found out on the closing day that the property had an oil tank or gas tank on it, and that he would have been responsible had he bought the property. It is interesting to note that his mortgage company would also have been responsible. That is the existing law at least in Ontario.

What we would be doing here if we passed this amendment would be to shelter the nuclear industry with the same type of practical responsibility that all other financiers have with regard to properties that are contaminated with toxic material. In this case it is probably the greatest type of toxic material that is available on this planet in terms of its radioactivity.

The other point I want to make is with regard to not treating them fairly. Whenever I hear that, it ignores the sentiment behind those comments and ignores the fact that this is an extremely dangerous operation. If there is a leak or a reaction that is not controlled, the consequences to the country and to the planet more generally are extremely grave. Probably the most clear examples of this are Chernobyl, and to a lesser degree, Three Mile Island.

The House of Commons has a responsibility to send the message to the operators of these plants and to the people who might finance them that this is a very high risk industry. Being high risk has to be taken into account when one is lending money.

Before I was elected, I sat on a credit union board. With respect to the loans that we made, it was no different from how the nuclear industry should be treated. Ultimately we would be responsible for the cleanup of the property because we would take back ownership of the property.

• (1600)

It is no different for a small financial institution or a major national or international lender. They also have to take into account the risk. We as a government should not be limiting that risk. We should be very clear what it is. We should be pointing that out, as I believe the existing legislation does. Anybody who is considering lending money should be required to take that into account before they advance funds.

I want to make one final point around the issue of lending funds. We have heard and in fact had some objection to the discussion we have had about Kyoto and how it is relevant to this amendment.

Government Orders

One of the things that will occur under Kyoto is that there will be a large need for new financing of new technology, particularly in the area of wind and solar because those are fairly immediate. In the longer term, we will require financial institutions and financiers generally to come forward and assist in the development of new technology.

If we continue down this road with this bill, then we will be draining a chunk of that financing out of the market here in Canada and internationally. Less financing will be available to deal with alternative energy and the development of those technologies. I believe we have to take that matter into account.

The government would have us believe that the bill has nothing to do with privatization. A number of people from that side of the House have said that to me, including the minister, but they are wrong. The legislation would in fact facilitate the privatization of the nuclear industry. If it goes through, it will allow British Energy to get its financing.

There is another nuclear plant, the Point Lepreau Nuclear Generating Station in New Brunswick. The Government of New Brunswick, as recently as in the last few weeks, said that it will not put in the \$875 million that plant needs to be safe in its operation. That plant will be on the block for new operators and perhaps new owners if the bill goes through. I have to say that we have been proven right so often that \$875 million is probably a light figure. It will probably cost as much as double that amount.

There are corporate interests, as we have seen British Energy from England and some of the companies in the United States, which in fact, if the bill goes through, would be interested in either managing and operating Lepreau or perhaps even purchasing it if the government of that province were prepared to sell it.

The bill is very much about privatization and facilitating the privatization of the nuclear industry. Based on the experience of privatization that we have seen in other energy sectors, the privatization of this industry causes my party great concern and it should cause great concern in the country generally. We should not be going down that road for a number of reasons.

• (1605)

Let me deal with safety first. If we are looking at maximizing the safety history of these plants, privatization is not the route we should be going down. It is simply too easy for the managers and operators of the plant to look at the bottom line, say that is what they are concerned about, but that if they do make the improvement or the repair it will cost millions of dollars, hundreds of millions in most cases. They will just let it go a little bit longer.

We have had all sorts of examples where our regulatory authorities were not well enough equipped to keep on top of that and make sure those repairs were done in a timely fashion.

The second feature we need to take into account is the cost factor of privatization. In every case that I am aware of where privatization has taken place in the energy sector across the continent and across the globe it has cost the consumers of that energy more money than it would have cost if the privatization had not occurred. The legislation is about privatization and there are serious consequences if privatization goes ahead.

Inevitably when we take part in this debate we need to know the alternatives. Let us say we do not go down this road and that we hold the liability as it is now, that would mean the nuclear power plants would remain in public hands and the private sector would not move in and provide the financing to take over these operations. We would then be facing, as have a number of countries in Europe, Germany probably being the best example, of what to do with the industry.

I treat the nuclear industry as a sunset industry. It is one that eventually will be phased out. The cost of disposing nuclear waste is simply so high and so risky that we cannot afford nuclear power.

A bill went through the House this past year where we were trying to deal with the disposal of nuclear waste. All sorts of suggestions were made on how to do that. The proposal that ended up in the bill was in my opinion totally unsatisfactory but it is one we will follow through on.

The scary part is that right now Canada is producing on a per capita basis more nuclear waste than any country in the world. We produce more than the United States in spite of the size of that country. By 2010 we will be outstripping the United States by a very large margin. The United States started earlier than Canada and have more plants, but by 2010 we will actually have more nuclear waste on our soil than the United States will have on its soil.

• (1610)

There is no methodology on this planet to deal with this issue. As I said earlier, we heard a number of suggestions. We did hear some silly ones, such as put it in a rocket and shoot it at the sun.

There is no way of disposing of this. Quite frankly, there is no way of putting a dollar cost on what it will ultimately cost the planet to dispose of the waste. We heard an Alliance member earlier today talk about the costs of operating a nuclear plant and saying that it was clean and cheap. However, as my friend from Sackville—Musquodoboit Valley—Eastern Shore pointed out, she was dead wrong on that. It is not clean because of the waste and it is not cheap because of the waste. If we factored in those costs it would be by far the most expensive type of energy on this planet. We ultimately do not know what the costs could be for the next generation, on down to thousands of years if we look at how long that radioactivity will continue.

When we look at a bill such this and we are told go ahead and pass it, that it is not very important, that it is a minor thing and that the nuclear industry needs the break, that is the wrong attitude. We should not be treating the financiers in the nuclear industry any differently or, in fact, as the bill would, more favourably than financiers in the rest of the field.

Government Orders

We should not be passing a bill that would allow the privatization of the industry. We should not be sending a message to the country that we will attempt either the privatization of the industry and allowing it to continue that way or to facilitate it as a government operation. We should be sending a very clear message to the industry and to the country that this is a sunset industry, that we will be phasing it out and that we will be dealing with the problems of phasing it out, both in terms of the waste and in terms of the training and retraining that will be necessary for the workers in those industries and for the communities that will be negatively impacted as we phase this industry out. That is the approach we should be taking. It is a much more logical and sensible approach and one that the country requires.

[Translation]

Mr. Mario Laframboise (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, BQ): Madam Speaker, I commend my colleague for his eloquent speech. I only want to ask him a question about a statement made by a Liberal member this afternoon. The member stated that debate on Bill C-4 should make any reference to the Kyoto protocol.

I would like to ask the following question to my colleague from Windsor—St. Clair. Would it not have been wiser to have a debate on the Kyoto protocol before introducing Bill C-4 to the House?

•(1615)

Mr. Joe Comartin: That is a good question, Madam Speaker. I have not thought about it, but it would be a good to hear what all members of Parliament have to say about Kyoto before discussing the nuclear industry.

[English]

It is not a situation where we can isolate ourselves off as the government would suggest that we can. When we are talking about energy in this day and age, we have to look at the whole gamut with which the country is confronted.

To suggest that we can parcel it off in little pieces here and there is to demean the significance of climate change and global warming. The necessity of us shifting as a society from dependency on aged technology, and I classify both fossil fuel burning and the nuclear industry in those categories, is apparent. It would make a lot more sense to deal with Kyoto and the implementation of Kyoto and all its parameters than to deal with the bill in isolation.

Mr. Charles Hubbard (Miramichi, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have a few comments to make. It is rather ironical that such a short bill is generating so much discussion. It is important that we discuss the issues because in the present century energy is probably one of the greatest concerns of Canadians and most people in the western world.

Last June when the bill was first introduced I also made a few brief comments. Today members have talked about energy, the environment, Kyoto and finances. Bill C-4 is basically about finances and financial responsibilities. Those who invest in an energy source, whatever it is, must take responsibility for what may happen as a result of that investment and that activity.

The hon. member mentioned what happened in the province of Ontario with regard to electricity. It is probably the same situation in

Quebec and across the United States. Energy has become a very difficult financial situation for many people.

One morning this week one of our bus drivers who lives across the river mentioned how his household would be faced with additional costs this winter. Those of us who have homes in Ontario know that the bills we get now have about 10 different parts. We are paying for debt, transmission, generation and other types of expenses that various investment companies are putting toward energy uses.

In terms of energy used in Canada we go back to water power or hydroelectricity which had some dangers associated with it. For those who lived along rivers with dams there was always a concern that a dam may wash out. In Germany during the war the Mohesee reservoir on the Mohne River was bombed and thousands of people lost their lives as a result of rushing waters.

We have to recognize that our own government has paid considerable attention to wind energy. Our last budget talked about special considerations for people who invest in wind energy. The Royal Bank of Canada has taken certain concerns with that and has offered special considerations for companies that may want to develop wind turbines. Then there is solar energy which is used for specific purposes to a lesser extent by people with homes.

In the last 30 to 40 years nuclear energy has been a great concern to people around the world in terms of Chernobyl and Three Mile Island. No new nuclear plant has been built in the United States of America since the 1970s. We have to take notice of that important issue.

The member alluded to the province of New Brunswick and the Point Lepreau plant which requires considerable upgrading at a cost of nearly \$1 billion. In terms of nuclear energy and in terms of the liability of companies that may become involved with it, the liability never ends. He also mentioned that nuclear rods used in those plants have a never-ending life cycle.

I would agree with many of the comments made today. As a Liberal member I too have great concerns with the bill. Will it only give special consideration to companies outside our country that are coming here to buy our energy generating plants? Or, does it have other purposes we may want to consider?

I hope we will hear further information so that all of us in the House could vote in a wise manner to know what is in the best interest of various companies, provinces, and especially the users of electricity.

•(1620)

Mr. Joe Comartin: Madam Speaker, I appreciate the comment of my friend from Miramichi who has obviously thought about the consequences of the bill, but I take exception with his comments when he tries to paint the government as assisting in the development of wind and solar energy. The reality is that we produce less than 1%. Some .06% of all our energy is from wind.

Government Orders

The United States and Germany are ahead of us. Denmark is the leading country in the world right now. It is at 18%. It will be at somewhere between 25% and 30% by 2010. We are way behind.

Let us talk about our solar energy development. Canada lost its priority that it had begun to develop after the oil crisis of the late seventies. We lost that as recently as the last few years to Japan. Its development of cells to facilitate the use of solar energy is now significantly ahead of where we are.

The Europeans are way ahead of us on wind which is a shame because we were at least competitive with them at the start of the nineties. We were way ahead of a number of countries in the world and we have lost that in solar energy to the Japanese. It is not a proud history. It is absolutely nothing to brag about. The unfortunate part is that the country will have to buy at great expense some of this technology

Through the summer I happened to be in Calgary. Great kudos to that city. It insisted that its entire rapid transit system be operated off wind power. I was talking to the owners of the wind farm who indicated they had to buy their turbines at an expense of between 5% and 10% more from Denmark.

If they were built in Canada they would see a savings of 5% to 10%. Of course that would create jobs and the new technologies that the country needs. Because of inaction on the part of the government we are in that kind of situation. That story is repeated in many ways across the country and will continue to be for a number of years until we play catch-up.

Mr. Loyola Hearn (St. John's West, PC): Madam Speaker, I have a very brief question for my hon. colleague. In light of the concerns and everyone's conversion into making sure that we have a clean environment in the future, does the hon. member think that the federal government should be encouraging wind power in certain parts of the country?

Specifically Newfoundland and Labrador has tremendous hydro resources. There has been very little encouragement or backing from the federal government in relation to development or any concern about making sure that power is kept for our Canadian use.

•(1625)

Mr. Joe Comartin: Madam Speaker, I agree that we have to be very careful about keeping the energy we create here for Canadian use. Just last week in the Maritimes there was a decision by the National Energy Board to allow for the sale of natural gas, which is at least a cleaner burning fossil fuel. It will continue to be exported in a very unfair manner to the United States, depriving New Brunswick of being able to access that gas. That will be very important for New Brunswick as it looks at how it will meet its Kyoto targets.

A number of decisions have to be made not only in the hydroelectric area but in other areas in terms of how we protect our energy sources so that we can have access to them and use them most efficiently in Canada.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mario Laframboise (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, BQ): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to speak today on Bill C-4. This is a simple bill. Its intent is, with just a few lines, to change the responsibility of those who finance and operate nuclear plants.

Our listeners may sometimes, too often, think—because they just read newspaper headlines or watch the major news stories on television—that the government is there to defend the citizens' interests and they should therefore trust it.

What we have before us is a bill that is far from defending the interests of our listeners. In fact, it is a bill that has been presented by the Liberal government to aid the nuclear industry. This bill has the support of the members of the Canadian Alliance and the Conservative Party. It is not a bill to help the public and defend its interests. It is a bill specifically to help one type of industry, the nuclear industry. This is a type of energy that is criticized all over the world. In most of the industrialized nations, the situation has gone beyond that, and it has been abandoned.

Perhaps this bill seems innocuous because of its lack of bulk, but it is all the more important because of its impact on the quality of life of our listeners.

I will try to give a brief legislative summary. This bill is, obviously, not very complex and not very thick. I will try to share my experience with the House. We all bring another profession to politics. I am a notary by profession. For the benefit our listeners in English speaking Canada, I will explain that this is a lawyer specialized in drawing up contracts. I will give my legal opinion, in a mild-mannered way, on the text we have before us. In connection with those responsible for site cleanup, the wording on responsibility was as follows:

—any other person with a right to or interest in, the affected land or place take the prescribed measures to reduce the level of contamination.

This was replaced with the following:

—any other person who has the management and control of—

Clearly, the terminology of “right to or interest in” has been replaced by the words “management and control of” in order to exempt banks, bankers and lending institutions from this responsibility. They would no longer have responsibility.

Actually, this would be the only industry where the liability of bankers would be limited. Business people who are listening know this: when they ask for money from a financial institution, they must comply with all of the environmental clauses. For the past ten years, this has been unavoidable. In larger businesses, there is the environmental stage that covers the preliminary impact study. Often, stage two is required, which is a complete impact study, and phase three, which is decontamination.

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This means that bankers would no longer be responsible in the nuclear industry for requiring these three phases. This is how it can be interpreted. Given that they would no longer be liable, they do not have to worry about it. Why do people who run businesses have environmental clauses in their contracts that they have to abide by? Because the banks feel liable. Therefore, they require clauses in lending contracts that force the borrower to comply with those clauses. The banks also require stages one and two, the appropriate environmental studies, and even require the inclusion of relevant updates at predetermined deadlines in the contracts.

• (1630)

This simple provision is being amended. This is a simple paragraph being amended in a legal text, as the Liberal member said earlier. Some might ask why there should be a lengthy debate in the House, given that the act is only a few pages long. However, these few pages are very important, because now financiers will no longer be liable and will no longer require that borrowers meet environmental standards. This may allow the nuclear industry to survive.

I hope that all those listening to us understand, based on the comments made by my learned colleague, the member for Joliette, and by my colleague from Windsor—St. Clair, that nuclear energy is on its way out. It is losing steam and it is destined to be phased out.

Canada is alone in its decision to support nuclear energy. Why? Likely because the Prime Minister has travelled around offering Candu reactors all over the place and tried to promote the industry by selling nuclear reactors, when this is going in the opposite direction of evolution of global society. It is often the smallest bills that have the greatest impact on human health. That is what we are debating today.

There is a reason why only the Bloc Québécois and the New Democratic Party are opposed to this bill. These are parties that are there to defend the interests of citizens and not to defend the interests of big business. This is the game that the Liberal government is playing. It is proposing an amendment that would help the nuclear industry. It is supported by the official opposition, represented by the Canadian Alliance, and by the Progressive Conservative Party, which hopes to get back in power.

Finally, all these people have decided to get together and to help the nuclear industry, which goes against the whole evolution of energy throughout the world.

I will repeat this argument, because a Liberal member rose in the House this afternoon to tell us, “We do not have to have a debate on Kyoto with Bill C-4”.

On the contrary, everything is connected. If we allow the nuclear industry to develop even more in Canada, while this goes against everything that is being discussed throughout the world, we will once again delay reaching our objectives and signing the Kyoto protocol.

It is inconceivable that we should be discussing Bill C-4, as the Prime Minister told us that we would have a vote in the House, before Christmas, on ratification of the Kyoto protocol.

Once again, this bill is rammed through the House to help the nuclear industry before a real debate can be held in Canada. This bill is not in the best interests of our listeners, but rather in the best interests of the nuclear industry, which is slowly dying, as it should be. It is only appropriate for this kind of energy, which is outdated and a health hazard, to disappear. We should not let Bill C-4 be passed. It only has a few lines and a few pages. The Liberals, the Alliance and the Conservatives have decided not to debate this legislation, because it is a short bill. In fact, it helps their friends in the nuclear industry.

Why has the Bloc Québécois decided today to fight Bill C-4? Because we have the best interests of all Quebeckers and of all Canadians at heart. We are glad to stand up for their interests, since their members of Parliament will not do it.

Members of the Bloc Québécois have taken a stand on energy development. Our position is clear: wind energy is the way to go. The Bloc proposed to the House the creation of a federal program to invest \$700 million in the wind industry. The program could have helped the Gaspé area, a region of Quebec that is going through some very tough times. It could have recovered much of the money invested in wind energy, which is a renewable energy source, the energy of the future. Some people found our proposal very funny. However, the figures mentioned today by my hon. colleague from Joliette and many others spoke for themselves.

The wind power capacity in Germany is of 8,753 megawatts, which accounts for 35.8% of all the energy the Germans use. Those are the facts. In the United States, 4,235 megawatts were wind-generated, which represents 17.3% of all their energy production, compared to 0.08% in Canada. Those are the facts.

• (1635)

Canada generates only 207 megawatts from wind energy. This debate today does not deal with renewable energies that are in tune with the Kyoto protocol. Those listening should know that we are talking now about nuclear energy. The government wants to relieve investors and bankers of their responsibilities for investments in nuclear energy. This is the Liberal government's proposal, and it is supported by the official opposition, the Canadian Alliance, and by the Progressive Conservative Party. This is typical of Canada.

It is not true that the Canadian government defends the public's interest. It defends the industry's interest. I could list many examples that show it does not look after our interests, but those of its friends. The two are not the same for the Liberal government. I am somewhat surprised that the Canadian Alliance is jumping on this bandwagon. If it were in power, it would probably do the same as the Liberal government. It is the only conclusion to be drawn here.

This is the tough reality, but the whole debate on Kyoto should not end. Despite what a Liberal member said this afternoon during the debate on this nuclear energy bill, we should not avoid discussing Kyoto.

This is what I will explain during my time remaining. In Canada, we should promote wind energy. The present government should take seriously the plan put forward by the Bloc Québécois for an investment of \$700 million over the next five years. The federal government does invest in the energy industry. Since 1970, it has invested more than \$66 billion in oil energy, more than \$6 billion in nuclear energy, and just \$327 million in renewable energies, including wind energy. This is the tough reality of lobbies controlling this Parliament.

The oil and nuclear lobbies are controlling this Parliament. They control the governing Liberal Party, the Canadian Alliance, and the Progressive Conservative Party. None of these parties take the interest of ordinary citizens to heart. They care more for their own power than for those they represent, even though they were elected to defend the interests of their fellow citizens.

I hope that the citizens who are listening will have a chance in the weeks to come to ask their MPs why they did not stand up in the House to say how much more important it was to discuss the Kyoto protocol rather than reducing the liability of those who operate the nuclear energy industry. This is an industry which is losing steam and which in any event is doomed to disappear—or so I hope—for the simple reason that the health of the men and women we represent is at stake.

It was a pleasure to debate Bill C-4 and to reiterate that the proposed legislation is a real legal setback. I will, if I may, read it again so that those who are watching understand clearly. Under the existing legislation, the Commission may order that, and I quote:

—any other person with a right to or interest in, the affected land or place take the prescribed measures to reduce the level of contamination.

Therefore, under the existing legislation, all other persons with a right to or interest in had to participate in the decontamination of the land or place or to resolve any nuclear energy problem.

The government is replacing this simple phrase with this:

—any other person who has the management and control of, the affected land or place take the prescribed measures—

Only the administrators and those who have a management responsibility, that is those who have something to do with the operation of the plant, will be responsible for the decontamination of the site. The financial sector is completely excluded.

I have heard colleagues tell us that there were problems with this nuclear energy industry and that there were lending difficulties. My colleague from Windsor—St. Clair is right. This will speed up the privatization process. The nuclear plants are often owned by public corporations because the private sector has no financial interest in them and because these plants would be too risky for them. This will help the privatization process. However, when we talk about privatization, we are not necessarily talking about corporations rich enough to decontaminate a site. Once again, things are not getting any better. They are even getting worse when we think that this regulatory change could allow the privatization of those nuclear plants by taking all responsibilities away from the bankers. We are certainly going backward rather than forward.

It is completely unthinkable that we could go in that direction. We are taking all responsibilities away not only from those who will

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grant new loans, but also from those who have already granted them or provided financial support. This bill will take all responsibility away from those who have financed nuclear energy in Canada.

• (1640)

It is not enough to say that it could encourage investments in the nuclear industry. On the contrary. This will once again help the friends of the Liberal Party, including the bank lobby, which has financed a part of the nuclear energy industry. These people are no doubt anxiously looking forward to the passing of Bill C-4 that will rid them of the risk that they are now facing.

I hope that my brief submission will have helped to convince the people who are listening, and you, Madam Speaker, that Bill C-4 should never, never be passed in the House. The Liberal Party of Canada, the Canadian Alliance and the Progressive Conservative Party would do well to protect the interests of the men and women who elected them rather than the interests of the multinationals or other companies controlling their party coffers.

Mr. Réal Ménard (Hochelaga—Maisonneuve, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his excellent speech and his indisputable and lucid verdict. A number of facts lead us to believe that the Liberal Party is following a lobbyist approach in this matter.

However, my questions for my colleague are not mainly on this issue. In his introduction, he told us how proud he was when he became a notary a few years ago. It is easy to understand that, when one works in a Parliament, any legal training is very useful. Madam Speaker, you also began a bachelor's degree at McGill University, if I am not mistaken. Life prevented you from getting your degree, but your erudition is obvious.

Could our colleague tell us why it is so important that we discuss Kyoto very soon? Our colleague, the member for Rosemont—Petite-Patrie, did applaud the idea of holding a debate in the House on that issue. He did so from Johannesburg, where he was before the beginning of the session.

I would like the member to explain why it is so important for future developments that we meet the objectives of the Kyoto protocol. Could he tell us in what ways Quebec is different, as far as meeting those objectives is concerned?

• (1645)

Mr. Mario Laframboise: Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Hochelaga—Maisonneuve for his question.

It is clear that we must discuss Kyoto as soon as possible. I hope that, at least, we will do so before adopting Bill C-4. Let us never forget that the nuclear industry is an industry that pollutes and that increases greenhouse gas emissions. Our objective with the Kyoto protocol is to reduce such emissions.

Today, we are discussing a problem that will increase pollution, and the purpose of the debates on Kyoto is precisely to ensure that, together, we reduce the pollution we create, including greenhouse gas emissions.

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Therefore, I hope that we will have this debate on Kyoto as soon as possible, and I also hope that it will be before Bill C-4 is passed. If we ever manage to convince the Liberal government, the official opposition and the Progressive Conservative Party that Kyoto must be urgently ratified, as we hope to do, then Bill C-4 will surely have to be reviewed.

Also, instead of helping lobbyists from the nuclear industry, the government should perhaps tell them that they should invest in another type of energy, such as wind energy. This would surely be a possibility and it could, among other things, benefit from a transfer of funds.

As I explained earlier, the federal government is investing a lot of money in the development of oil and nuclear energy. But now it is time to invest in wind energy. So, my advice to bankers and friends of the Liberal Party is to invest in renewable energy. It is not fully developed, there is still potential, and there is money to be made.

To answer the hon. member's question, it is very important that we soon discuss Kyoto.

As for Quebec, it made a brilliant choice by opting for hydroelectricity even though, as the hon. member for Joliette explained, it was a very difficult choice to make. Electricity was nationalized and that was not an easy decision to make. There were dozens of companies in Quebec. We decided to turn this into a major operation and it was a true success.

Of course, Quebec made societal choices, and Quebecers decided to get results and, among others, to ensure that our province is the closest to achieving the Kyoto goals. This is why the Quebec government was quick to announce that it was prepared to ratify Kyoto at the earliest opportunity. If Quebec were not part of Canada, it would have ratified the accord a long time ago.

[*English*]

Mr. Joe Comartin (Windsor—St. Clair, NDP): Madam Speaker, I want to ask a question but I will make a comment first.

The natural resources committee spent a great of time dealing with the issue of nuclear waste over the last year or 15 months. We heard a lot of witnesses and evidence. We considered the Seaborn Commission report, the report that came from the federal government and more specifically from the nuclear industry, about likely places where the waste would be deposited in underground storage. That is one of the most likely alternatives that would be followed under that legislation. I should point out that both my party and the Bloc Québécois actively opposed.

One reason I believe his party was particularly concerned about the disposal was that it may occur on the Canadian Shield and may occur on the Quebec side of the border. Is he aware of that and what is his sense of the reaction in Quebec if that were ultimately the decision as to the disposal of nuclear waste in the country?

• (1650)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mario Laframboise: Madam Speaker, my colleague is right. One of the conclusions of the report was that the best place to store nuclear waste was in the Canadian Shield. The reaction in Quebec was strong. It is not an industry that we favour. We chose

hydroelectricity instead. Imagine if, to add insult to injury, we were forced to bury nuclear waste in Quebec's portion of the Canadian Shield. The reaction is already bad, and it is easy to foresee the battle that would ensue if such a decision were made.

We deal with our problems. Of course, it must be understood that, in some respects, we will never accept being the victims of everyone else's problems.

Mr. Pierre Paquette (Joliette, BQ): Madam Speaker, I too would like to commend the hon. member for Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel for his contribution. I find that it is extremely important, given the diversity of backgrounds of the members of the House, for each and every one of us, with his or her professional and life experiences, to contribute to the debate in order to inform the people of Canada and Quebec as well as all members of the House.

The hon. member raised a point that I would like him to explain once more because it is fundamental. Legally, how would it be in our interest, as law makers considering this bill, to ask society to cover a risk that is too high for the financial backers?

Could the hon. member explain it again, because I believe it is extremely important in this debate?

Mr. Mario Laframboise: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Joliette. This bill is aimed at reducing the responsibility of bankers and industry administrators.

That is what I have tried to explain to those who are watching us. It is the only industry in all of Canada where bankers or those who have an interest in the industry would be free from any responsibility. This is the choice that members of this House are making on behalf of the public, of their listeners, of those who elected them.

From a legal standpoint, it is a terrible choice. This kind of arrangement does not exist in any other industry in Canada. The government tried to explain to us that there is danger associated with the nuclear industry, but in the legal world, an exclusion of responsibility is also synonymous with danger. All those who have signed contracts in their lives know it. When the seller wants to be free of any responsibility, it is dangerous. What we are doing right now in this House is taking the place of those who already have a responsibility and freeing them from that responsibility, in the name of the public good. And we would become responsible for any problem.

In that respect, the worst legal decision that this Parliament can make is the one that the Liberal government is making right now, with the support of the Canadian Alliance and the Conservative Party.

Mr. Réal Ménard (Hochelaga—Maisonnette, BQ): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to speak to this bill, but first allow me to make three brief announcements before coming back to the main issue.

I was earlier in the lobby and I learned that today is the birthday of Theresa, from the NDP, who offered us a piece of cake. I wish her the very best.

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Madame Speaker, I also wish to offer my best wishes of success to you and to the new pages, at the beginning of the session.

This bill is very important but it is also very disappointing. It is disappointing because all members of the Bloc Québécois, and I believe NDP members as well, would have been very happy to discuss matters much more important than the strengthening of the nuclear industry.

I turned 40 in May. You will probably say that I hardly look that old, but it nevertheless is a fact. When I was 17 or 18, I was a very active militant for peace and I participated in several peace marches. For at least 20 years, we have been waiting with all our hearts for some action that would exclude from public life any reason to promote the nuclear industry.

The Liberal government likes to portray itself as a left of centre and progressive government. How many times have we not heard in this House the Minister of International Trade, the Minister of Industry or the Minister of Justice say that they are true liberals, in the philosophical meaning of the word. When we proceed to questions and comments, I would like to have someone explain how a true liberal can promote the strengthening of the nuclear industry with public funds.

How can that be part of a philosophy we could be proud of as members of Parliament? I hope they will take part to this debate and remind us why, as Liberals, they made this choice as a government.

Let us start at the beginning. Historically, Quebec was extremely disadvantaged in terms of energy options. As has been said on several occasions, Quebec made choices based on its natural resources. Quebec is now known throughout the world for the abundance of its water resources. We chose hydroelectricity because of the abundance of water in Quebec.

We made this choice at a time where this was unpopular. For those who would be tempted to think that this began shortly after the quiet revolution, we should point out that it began in the early 1940s. At that time, Quebec chose hydroelectricity, which is a non-polluting source of energy, at least much less polluting than the traditional fossil fuels. We made this choice in the early 1940s, and it was consolidated by the René Lévesque government.

This choice was not an easy one, because there was arbitration, there were interpretations and assessments of the situation that were divergent. Quebec made a choice that turned out to be extremely positive today.

Yet, Quebecers are taxpayers; they send taxes to the federal government. Did they receive any help in choosing hydroelectricity? Certainly not. And yet \$66 billion—that is a lot of zeros—was distributed to help the oil industry.

• (1655)

Quebec had to pay for all the expenses it had to incur to put in place the infrastructure needed for hydroelectricity. As the member for Hochelaga—Maisonneuve, I remember that, in the early 1980s, there were six large refineries in the east end of Montreal. Then, there was a deindustrialization that was encouraged to a large extent by the policies of the Canadian government. Thus, Quebecers were

never able to rely on policy and public financial support in the energy choices that they made.

We must remember these events, because they are certainly not extraneous to the pussyfooting of the government concerning the ratification of the Kyoto protocol. We know that, but for the pressure of the Bloc Québécois, which, during the two last sessions, in an extremely enlightened manner and with much perseverance, through the member for Rosemont—Petite-Patrie—whom my colleagues will want to applaud for his perseverance on this issue—the government would have given up and decided not to ratify it.

It is in moments such as this that we realize the Bloc Québécois is the only political party which unconditionally defends Quebec's interests, and whose sole concern is the wellbeing of Quebecers. Again, were it not for my political party, the Kyoto debate would have gone almost unnoticed.

We must give credit to the Bloc Québécois for what it did. Were it not for this party, the government would never have made the commitments it did.

Mrs. Girard-Bujold: Certainly not with the Canadian Alliance.

Mr. Réal Ménard: I have to admit, as the hon. member for Jonquière is hinting, that the position of the Canadian Alliance is rather disappointing. We must remember that the Canadian Alliance and the oil industry sleep in the same bed and dream the same dream, the dream of a status quo where polluting industries keep using traditional fossil fuels. I am disappointed that the Canadian Alliance members are slow to consider alternatives like wind energy, and to tell us what they think of less polluting technologies. But let us not stray from the essential point.

In 1997, the then Minister of the Environment—I think I can name her because she is not a sitting member any more, and the hon. member for Jonquière will correct me if I am wrong—was Mrs. Stewart, a nurse by profession. So, Mrs. Stewart, who was the Minister of the Environment at the time and has now retired from public life, went to sign the Kyoto protocol. This was an extremely firm commitment. There was no room for equivocation.

According to that commitment Canada is committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions to 6% below 1990 levels. Not 6% below current levels, but it was expected that as early as the beginning of the decade measures would be taken to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. A 2008-2012 time line is being considered for reaching this goal, which was set at a multilateral conference attended by more than 100 countries. Of course we understand the importance of reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

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It happens in this Parliament that we do not always understand in practical terms the significance of our actions. When we talk about the issues of pollution and sustainable development and the reduction of greenhouse gas, nothing is more concrete, more current and nothing is closer to the ground we stand on than the fight we are engaging in.

What would it mean if the government, or if Quebecers and Canadians did not respect their commitment. As an aside I will remind the House that if we were to exclude Quebec, Canada would be the slowest in reducing greenhouse gases. If we look at Canada's performance, excluding Quebec, it is one of the industrialized countries that contribute the most to pollution. Fortunately, Quebecers are here with their values and the legislation they passed to reduce greenhouse gases.

I do not want to give the impression that people in Saskatchewan, Alberta, Ontario and the maritime provinces do not share the same concerns for the environment as our fellow citizens in Quebec, but I must say that Quebec is among the governments that have been the most progressive, the most active in reducing greenhouse gases.

Why should we all, and that includes the member for Granby, be that concerned about environmental issues? Because the issue of greenhouse gas emissions has to do with climate changes, which of course are linked to the preservation of our natural resources.

Can we believe that the level of the St. Lawrence River could be significantly lowered due a compensation phenomenon, and that other waterways could experience overflowing and floods, with all the consequences that this could have for the neighbouring populations. This is what happens when we do not pay attention to our environment, when we have climate changes and other situations where confrontations cause the natural elements to unleash their forces.

• (1705)

I know that the Quebecers will never forget the ice storm that cost them so much. We will have to face more and more events like these if we do not take our responsibilities as parliamentarians and if we do not modify some of our patterns of consumption.

According to the International Panel on Climate Change, if we do not pay attention and if we do not ratify the Kyoto protocol, we will see more and more floods and droughts and natural spaces will be irreversibly damaged. Of course, when we talk about damage to natural spaces, we refer to damage involving habitats and ecosystems and to an increasing incidence of many infectious diseases. This is not the least of our concerns. I represent a waterside riding. Hochelaga—Maisonneuve is connected to the St. Lawrence River. It also contains a part of the port of Montreal, one of the largest ports in Canada.

Once again, we have to be extremely vigilant on the issue of ratifying the Kyoto protocol because we are looking at the danger of a drop in the level of the St. Lawrence River. The flow of the St. Lawrence will decrease while the ocean level will get higher, causing major floods.

By then, it will be too late for the Alliance members from Manitoba and British Columbia who are dragging their feet on the issue of ratifying Kyoto. When mother nature unleashes her fury,

they will have to take part of the blame while we in the Bloc Québécois, and the Liberal members who support Kyoto, will have done our job warning them and advising them to the best of our knowledge.

Another very important aspect relating to the ratification of the Kyoto protocol is the fact that an entire environment support industry will spring into action. It is referred to as a green industry. It is estimated that close to \$1 billion in new industries could emerge to support the conversion of certain industries and new approaches to intervention by the various economic sectors. Of course, this will be extremely beneficial to all Quebecers and Canadians.

Let there be no mistake. While the Bloc Québécois is in favour of ratifying the Kyoto protocol, it believes that territorial objectives should be included. Naturally, Quebec took its responsibilities in this respect long ago. It converted to hydroelectric power at the time when Pierre Elliott Trudeau's National Energy Program was reaching out to the oil and gas industries. We cannot allow Quebec not to be compensated, when it delivered the goods and took its responsibilities, and accept that its policies be ignored in dividing responsibilities, particularly fiscal responsibilities.

This is why we believe that if Kyoto is ratified, territorial objectives should be divided in such a way as to recognize what Quebec has already accomplished.

Again, this is not easy. I hope that I will get questions and that the Liberals will take part in the debate. How can the Prime Minister travel to Johannesburg and participate in various international forums to address the need to developing non-polluting energy sources, and then come up with a bill like this one? In a way, this bill not only restores, consolidates and supports the nuclear energy approach, but it puts all forms of energy on an equal footing. And that is dangerous.

In fact, my colleagues mentioned it a number of times and I would be remiss not to do so also. The Bloc Québécois came up with a program to promote the development of wind energy. It is the way of the future. It would have cost a few million dollars.

The purpose of the Bloc Québécois' proposal was to develop a wind power capacity of at least 1,000 megawatts in Quebec, mainly in the Gaspé region which has been sorely tested, as we all know, in the last few years. Seven hundred million dollars would have been invested over a period of five years. It would have been feasible, especially since \$66 billion was handed out to the oil industry in the last few decades. Again, I think the Bloc Québécois was well-advised to bring forward such a proposal. By the way, if it were to be implemented—a \$700 million investment over a period of five years is entirely feasible—it would create over 15,000 jobs in the Gaspé and Lower St. Lawrence area.

So, I do not know how we can dig ourselves out of this hole and put an end to this ridiculous debate on Bill C-4. I think the Liberals, the Alliance members and everyone in this House should agree to withdraw this bill so that we can move on and, as quickly as possible, start debating what should be the real issue here, our main concern, which is the imminent and immediate ratification of the Kyoto protocol.

Ms. Jocelyne Girard-Bujold (Jonquière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I commend my colleague from Hochelaga—Maisonneuve for his excellent speech. The Bloc Québécois member mentioned several reasons why this bill should be scrapped.

Will our colleague tell us why the Liberal, Alliance and Tory members are so bent on this bill, when we know, as the member indicated at the end of his comments, that the most important issue right now, beyond all political considerations, is the ratification of the Kyoto protocol, while we know that this bill is aimed at increasing greenhouse gas emissions?

• (1715)

Mr. Réal Ménard: Mr. Speaker, this is a good question, even if it is ad hoc. It is a very good question. Incidentally, I remind the House that last year, as I recall, the hon. member for Jonquière tabled a bill promoting the use of public transit.

Promoting the use of public transit through a tax deduction—I believe that was the substance of her bill, which I had the pleasure of supporting—is very supportive of the philosophy that underlies the Kyoto protocol.

Because it goes without saying that cars are a major source of pollution. Therefore, it is to our benefit, as a society, to promote the use of public transit. I myself am in my early forties and I have never owned a car. I live between the Pie IX and Viau metro stations, and I rely on public transportation whenever I can. Of course, I use other means of transportation when that is not possible.

So, I thank the hon. member for Jonquière for the initiative that she took in 2000. I sensed a great deal of sadness and concern on her part because the Canadian Alliance stubbornly opposes the Kyoto protocol, and it is indeed very sad. However, we should not lose hope of convincing that party to ratify the protocol.

Of course, there is a lot of money at stake, as the hon. member for Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel reminded us earlier. Tell me who is funding you and I will tell you who you are. If I had to summarize in one sentence the speech made by the hon. member for Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, that would be it.

Unfortunately, we are only too aware of the incestuous relationship that exists between certain political parties and the oil industry.
[English]

Mr. Joe Comartin (Windsor—St. Clair, NDP): Mr. Speaker, there has been the suggestion a couple of times this afternoon from the Alliance Party, I think it was, that in order to achieve the Kyoto targets which Canada will be required to achieve under that protocol we will need to have the nuclear industry provide the mechanisms to do that, that it is the only way to achieve those targets. I wonder if he could comment. Does he share that thinking? Or does he see alternatives to the nuclear industry with us still being able to achieve our targets under Kyoto?

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[Translation]

Mr. Réal Ménard: Mr. Speaker, once again the alternative solutions that my party presented refer obviously to our plan for promoting and developing wind energy. As part of our plan, we asked Canada Economic Development to set aside \$700 million, over five years, to create 15,000 jobs.

We reiterate that we do not believe—and we have felt this way for a long time—that public funds should be used to encourage the development of the nuclear industry. We do not believe that this is the way of the future. We hope that the government will listen to reason.

Mr. Pierre Paquette (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, first of all, I would like to congratulate the member for Hochelaga—Maisonneuve on his speech. As I mentioned earlier, having had him as a student, I hope that I contributed, even if only in a small way, to his eloquence and erudition. It is always heart-warming to have the opportunity to see one of one's former students do such an impressive job in this House.

I would like to ask him a question pertaining to a small excerpt from a press release issued by the Minister of Natural Resources, which I would like to read to the House. It is only two short paragraphs.

These companies—companies that own and operate nuclear facilities—must have access to commercial credit to finance their needs, like any other enterprise.

This amendment—the one proposed in Bill C-4—will allow the nuclear industry to attract market capital and equity. At the same time, we can continue to ensure that nuclear facilities are managed in a safe and environmentally sound manner. The Act's current wording has been interpreted to extend site remediation liabilities beyond the owners and managers to also include lenders, creating for them unknown financial obligations that may far exceed their commercial interest. The result has been to discourage private sector interest in lending to the nuclear industry.

The Minister of Natural Resources tells us that the proposed amendment is purely administrative in nature. Given the wording of the press release, does the member share the minister's opinion?

• (1720)

The Deputy Speaker: The member for Hochelaga—Maisonneuve will no doubt want to tell us how great a teacher the member for Joliette was.

Mr. Réal Ménard: You are so right, Mr. Speaker. I will tell you that the time I spent at the Cégep Maisonneuve in the early 1980s, where the member for Joliette was my teacher, was a great period in my life. I would never have imagined that we would both be sitting on the same side in the House of Commons one day.

At that time, the member for Joliette was working on a book on the history of the CSN. I invite members to read that book. He was indeed a good teacher, and he gave me a taste for a kind of social democracy in which I still believe.

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That being said, I think that we can agree that the Minister of Natural Resources is out of his mind when he says that this amendment is purely of an administrative nature. We are freeing the banks from their responsibilities. I totally agree with what my colleague, the member for Argenteuil, said in this House regarding the responsibilities of the financial sector in this matter.

Ms. Madeleine Dalphond-Guiral (Laval Centre, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I have a very special comment to make. I have been a teacher much longer than the member for Joliette, because I am older.

I appeal to the women I have taught: get involved in politics. I believe they would bring something to the kind of debate we are having today. The Liberal government and the Alliance oppose an open and dynamic vision in terms of quality of the environment and good health for the public. The least we can say is that their opposition is based on questionable motives. If there were more women in politics, this would somewhat change the dynamics of this House. I hope my message has been heard.

We support Kyoto; we are for virtue and for happiness, but it nevertheless remains important to have a job.

I would like the member for Hochelaga—Maisonneuve to tell us briefly what the impact on Quebec would be if, for example, an investment of a few hundred million dollars was made to promote wind energy. I believe that talking about figures is a language that the public usually understands well.

The Deputy Speaker: The member for Hochelaga—Maisonneuve has only one minute left.

Mr. Réal Ménard: Mr. Speaker, it makes me sad.

We have indications that an investment in this type of energy is much more cost effective per capita than an investment in traditional energy.

I remind this House of our proposal that Canada Economic Development invest \$700 million over five years. It is very little, compared to the \$66 billion, but it would be much more worthwhile in terms of the environment, job creation and, of course, conservation.

Ms. Madeleine Dalphond-Guiral (Laval Centre, BQ): Mr. Speaker, here I am again, the luck of the draw. So now I have the opportunity of pointing out that you are in the chair as I prepare for my first speech of the new session. This is a speech that is very particular in that it was prepared by a young man from Alberta. His name is Lee Wheeler and he is a parliamentary intern. So yesterday I announced to him “Dear, you are going to write me a speech” and he paled. He did not get a wink of sleep but he turned up with a speech and I would ask you to listen because it really is the product of his reflection.

My first speech of this new session will address nuclear safety. It is a very clear illustration of my concerns, as well as one of the major concerns of the Bloc Québécois, and of Quebec society, and I am pleased to think of Canadian society as well: environmental quality and its preservation.

If energy has revolutionized the industrialized world, but with disastrous consequences, alas, for the environment, needless to say

this debate cannot ignore the very real dangers of nuclear energy. This debate ought instead to give us an opportunity to look at all of its aspects.

Who among us does not recall Chernobyl or, closer to home, Three Mile Island. As we know, energy is fundamental to the development of modern society. The world's energy comes in large part from fossil fuels, coal and other petroleum products. Although new industries have developed in recent decades, nuclear energy in particular—which had much promise but has turned out very different from expectations—the environmentally friendly alternatives such as wind and solar power, continue to be ignored, neglected by the federal government.

Despite the dangers and risks clearly associated with nuclear energy, the federal government has chosen to amend the Nuclear Safety Act in order to—imagine—make it less strict, and consequently less effective, as well as consequently more sympathetic to the major financiers. The changes proposed in Bill C-4 are unacceptable on a number of grounds, and should not be adopted by this chamber.

The government claims it is presenting a simple and minor change. This is true, two and a half lines could not be simpler. However, this bill will most certainly have serious repercussions not only in Quebec, but also throughout the rest of Canada. The Nuclear Safety Act is supposed to protect Canadians from the environmental and financial risks involved in a potential nuclear disaster. Currently, the wording of the bill gives the Atomic Energy Control Board the power to order site owners or occupants or “any other person who has the management and control of , the affected land or place [to] take the prescribed measures to reduce the level of contamination”.

This wording covers a wide range of parties who are considered liable, since it ensures that all those who are involved in the industry are responsible for the burden of decontamination, in the event that an accident were to occur.

Through Bill C-4, the government is attempting to eliminate the decontamination obligation for a whole group of individuals involved. Instead of including “any other person with a right to, or interest in”, the Liberals are proposing that only those who have “the management and control of” the land must “take the prescribed measures to reduce the level of contamination”.

• (1725)

This is a major change; it is a change that is completely unacceptable for the Bloc Québécois, for Quebec and for Canada.

I have a few questions. What on earth could have pushed the Minister of Natural Resources to propose such changes? Why is he being a party to the federal government's scheme in proposing such a change? Why is he choosing to threaten the health, even the lives of our fellow citizens? The answer is quite simple, even “elementary my dear Watson,” as some would say.

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According to the Minister of Natural Resources, and I quote him, “The Act’s current wording has been interpreted to extend site remediation liabilities beyond the owners and managers to also include lenders”. This is terrible. This cannot be the minister speaking.

He continued by saying that lenders would therefore be confronted with “financial obligations that may exceed by far their commercial interest”. Who is ignoring the fact that the potential dangers of the nuclear industry are immense? What lender would commit to such projects without assessing the risks involved? That is why the Nuclear Safety and Control Act was adopted in the first place.

A simple cost-benefit analysis clearly shows that the investment is not worth the risk. Why then should we, as a society, take on these risks and these responsibilities and pay the price if there is contamination? There is only one answer to that question: we should put on our biggest smile and take on those risks for the benefit of those who invest in polluting industries.

We do not and will never agree with the government. Nevertheless, the status quo is not the solution here. In the wake of Kyoto, we need to promote and support alternative energy sources. This will not only create thousands of new jobs, but it will also prove that our societal choices are based on developing environmentally friendly industries.

What the Bloc Québécois is proposing is a federal investment program to support the efforts of a strong alternative energy industry in Quebec, something that would benefit Quebec and the rest of Canada.

We are talking about a \$700 million investment—not a lot of money compared to what is spent on health, the economy and the environment—over a five-year period to encourage the development of the wind industry in Quebec, especially in the Gaspé area. This would reflect Canada’s commitment to the protection of the environment.

We have heard several times the federal minister responsible for regional development regret the hardship facing outlying areas, and not only in Quebec. The way to help outlying areas is to have the fortitude to bring forward measures to foster the development of these areas, like promoting the wind industry.

● (1730)

Quebec has always been a leader in the production of green energy in Canada. While several other provinces continue to depend on coal and other oil products to heat their homes and light their buildings, and are not unhappy about it, Quebec relies mainly on hydroelectricity for its energy needs. For Quebec and Quebecers, this is a legitimate source of pride. Incidentally, Quebec produces more than half of all wind-generated electricity produced in Canada, and this production is well short of its real capacity.

The development of alternative energies is a priority not only in Quebec, but also in all developed societies. The ratification of the Kyoto accord has long been advocated by the Bloc Québécois. In April 2001, the National Assembly of Quebec passed a unanimous motion in favour of this position. For many years now, Quebec has been working on the international stage to promote the fight against

climate change with tools like the U.N. framework convention on climate change.

Two action plans have been implemented in Quebec since 1996 to ensure Quebec’s formal adherence to the convention’s goals. Presently, in Quebec, electricity is 95% green. Unfortunately, the Liberal government continues to favour polluting industries, to use fossil fuels and to ignore the need to look for green alternatives. Even if natural resources are under provincial jurisdiction, the federal government, with its encroachments, its hemming and hawing and its lack of vision, is not only impeding the national success of these businesses, but also undermining Quebec’s environmental leadership on the international stage.

But members will admit that this is not the first time this government has tried to undermine Quebec. The most recent statements concerning Quebec’s delegations abroad are perfect examples of what I just said; I must however congratulate the Liberal members who dared challenge those statements.

It would appear that how to finance these new energies is also a problem. If we look carefully at the government’s decisions over the 1990s—it was almost yesterday—we see that over \$450 million went directly to the oil industry and the nuclear industry, whereas a paltry \$8 million went to the renewable energy industries. One dollar to green energies, and fifty to the nuclear and oil industries. Honestly, the difference is striking and everyone would have to agree that the government’s priority is certainly not the quality of the environment, regardless of its announced intention of ratifying the Kyoto protocol in the coming weeks. Or the inconsistency is systematic.

This disparity is unacceptable. Rather than committing to the promotion of green energy, the federal government shamelessly continues to subsidize the polluting industries. With Bill C-4, its choice seems clear: pollution at all costs.

● (1735)

In Newfoundland the Hibernia project alone—which was good for Newfoundland, I agree—received over \$3.8 billion in subsidies, loans guarantees and interest advances. This amounts 65% of the total cost of the project. This is not bad.

The benefit for Newfoundland was obvious since it resulted in an economic growth of over 6.5% a year—which Newfoundland really needed—and as a result of this economic growth the province is posting the lowest unemployment rate in 12 years.

The economic benefits of a wind energy project in Quebec will not be any less positive; they will be even better since they will not be polluting.

According to the U.S. Department of Energy—they know how to count, they are big guys—wind energy creates more jobs than any kind of thermal energy, over five times more than thermal energies and nuclear energy.

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For its part, the European Association of Wind Energy believes that for each megawatt of wind energy produced, around 60 year-round jobs are created. The association is forecasting that by the year 2020—neither you nor I will be here by then, Mr. Speaker—over 2.4 million people will be employed by this industry in the European Union. This should be food for thought for the opponents of Kyoto.

The positive impacts of the development of a wind energy industry in Quebec and in Canada are obvious. I would even add that this is an inevitable change. The only problem is the lack of will on the part of the federal government. Although they claim to be ready to ratify Kyoto, the Liberals are obviously hesitant to push for the development of renewable energy industries, as you will see in the following example.

The December 2001 budget—it was a Christmas present—introduced an extraordinary indicator to show its interest in wind energy projects: 1.2 cents per kilowatt-hour of production for projects commissioned in 2002; 1.1 cents per kilowatt-hour in 2003, and so on, down to 0.8 cents per kilowatt-hour in 2007. Had it been 2008, it would have rhymed.

The federal government is far from the 2.7 cents per kilowatt-hour subsidies provided in the U.S. It is even a bit ridiculous. It is obvious that ridicule has never killed anyone yet, but it could happen one day.

The Bloc Québécois is proposing a program that could set an example for all of Canada. Quebec is responsible for the majority of the green production in Canada. It is very well positioned to promote and develop these industries. The impact of such a development will contribute to the creation of more than 15,000 jobs. The growth of these industries will facilitate the implementation of the Kyoto protocol, not to mention the fact that the wind energy industry in Quebec will prove to be a financial success.

By maintaining the fiscal imbalance between Canada and the provinces, the federal government will once again miss a golden opportunity to develop a strong clean energy industry in Quebec and in Canada.

● (1740)

Mr. Speaker, I would like to know if I still have time because I have to decide on what is important here. I hope that questions will be asked to—

The Deputy Speaker: I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member, but she can always hope for a question that will allow her to finish her remarks. At this time, however, I have to recognize the hon. member for Windsor—St. Clair.

[*English*]

Mr. Joe Comartin (Windsor—St. Clair, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the member if she is aware that the union movement, the labour movement, in this country has spent a great deal of time on dealing with issues of what it calls “just transition”, which means that in a situation like the phasing out of the nuclear industry provisions would be made to deal with the disruption in the labour market caused by people being moved out of that industry, provisions to prepare them to gain employment in other areas of the economy.

In that context, the labour movement in the country has been quite forward thinking, especially in the fossil fuel and nuclear industries, where it has actually begun work on plans as to how that would be done. The labour movement is supportive, generally speaking, of phasing out the nuclear industry and working to phase out the use of fossil fuels and replace them with alternative sources of energy.

My question is quite straightforward. Is she aware of that work and does she have any comments on it?

● (1745)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Madeleine Dalphond-Guiral: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

Obviously, all these changes in the industrial organization can arouse fear and raise the spectre of unemployment. It is quite normal.

But we should be able to consider what will happen in the long term to our beautiful planet, a planet that appears to be blue from outer space, if we do not change our ways radically.

I think the reflections of the labour movement will not be a hindrance, but will bring new solutions. I am sure my colleague will agree that, if we invested in renewable energies and if we had started doing so years ago, the problem would be far less serious today.

The danger with Bill C-4 is that, by protecting big investors in the nuclear industry, we are inviting big donations for political parties. This is what we are doing, instead of clearly considering the development of a society with a sound environment, or promoting better health for us, our children and future generations, or promoting good vegetable gardening that will keep us in good health.

I sincerely hope that groups in our society, unions included, will be able to come up and provide us with concepts that will help us, as parliamentarians, but also for the whole population, meet the challenge of dangerous and polluting industries while providing a good quality of life and the means to face our financial obligations. These concepts should make Canada, of which we are still a part, and Quebec a place that is dynamic and prosperous, where people feel good.

Mr. Loyola Hearn (St. John's West, PC): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member has told us that she has other very interesting information. What is it?

Ms. Madeleine Dalphond-Guiral: You know, Mr. Speaker, if there is one quality that is important in everyday life, that quality is curiosity. It promotes debate.

It will therefore be a pleasure to answer this question. I have already said this, but I will read my document slowly. With Bill C-4, the Canadian government is choosing investors over Canadians.

Freeing financial syndicates from their moral obligations while leaving untouched their profits, which are not negligible, I am sure, can only be a cause for concern about the future of both the Canadian and the Quebec societies. The government is relinquishing its responsibility to protect public health and the environment.

You will have understood that the Bloc Québécois is fiercely opposed to Bill C-4, and I think my colleague will agree with me.

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• (1750)

Mr. Mario Laframboise (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask a question to my colleague from Laval Centre.

This afternoon, in the House, a Liberal member rose to tell us not to discuss Bill C-4 in combination with the Kyoto protocol. Discussing nuclear energy without referring to the Kyoto protocol does not make any sense. This is the object of my question to my colleague from Laval Centre.

The government should, as soon as possible, have a debate on the Kyoto protocol, especially before passage of Bill C-4, whose purpose is to facilitate the development of the highly polluting nuclear industry, one of the most polluting industries on the planet. Is it not the time for the government to put that front and centre, table all relevant information and immediately hold a debate on Kyoto?

Ms. Madeleine Dalphond-Guiral: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel for his question.

When Parliament was prorogued, many of us were naive enough to believe that the Speech from the Throne would be innovative, that there would be some consistency. We are forced to say that, once again, consistency is not part of the Liberals' vocabulary and that what they are serving us is inconsistency. Indeed, as my colleague from Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel has correctly pointed out, delaying discussion of the ratification of the Kyoto protocol, holding a thoughtful, common sense, intelligent debate such as we are capable of having sometimes, delaying this and introducing Bill C-4 clearly demonstrates a kind of paradox that everyone is aware of: nuclear energy is dangerous. Even if we had absolutely safe nuclear plants, the fact still remains that nuclear waste has a life span that is obviously terrifying for everyone.

For the government to consider storing in the Canadian Shield very fine, very compact bricks that will stay there until the end of time, it is a sign of arrogance, of believing that humanity, in its great competence, is capable of being stronger than nature. I think that nature is strong; we must work with it and not against it. It is the objective of the Kyoto protocol: protecting the environment to give nature the opportunity to serve all living creatures on Earth.

Ms. Jocelyne Girard-Bujold (Jonquière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, before I speak to Bill C-4, I would like to congratulate my colleague, the member for Laval Centre, for her clear-sighted and impressive speech. It opens doors for the debate we will now have on Bill C-4.

I am very happy to have the opportunity to talk about Bill C-4 today. As you know, nuclear energy is a very important issue for me. For more than a month, two years ago, I saw how the Canadian nuclear energy industry laughed at the citizens from the Saguenay region in the matter of MOX imports.

You all know about the debate we had on importing MOX from the Soviet Union and how people in my area were opposed to the idea of airplanes transporting containers of that product over their heads. We won our case.

Research scientists in the industry work behind closed doors, ignore the population, paint a bright picture of the industry and think that the public cannot and should not understand the situation, because people do not have the required training to do so.

One does not need to be an expert to understand that the nuclear industry creates radioactive waste that will last for thousands of years and that it is not a green energy like wind or solar energy, but rather a form of energy the appropriateness of which should be reviewed.

I can only approach this issue with a very critical mind. It is for this reason and for many others that I am so interested in taking part in this debate on Bill C-4, An Act to amend the Nuclear Safety and Control Act.

As it now stands, the act says that the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission may, and I quote “—order that the owner or occupant of, or any other person with a right to or interest in the affected land or place [to] take the prescribed measures to reduce the level of contamination”. That is what the current act says: “take the prescribed measures to reduce the level of contamination”.

The phrase “any other person with a right to or interest in, the affected land or place” is quite broad. It means that any person with an interest may be made to pay in case of a spill or any other kind of problem. This means everybody, including lenders. That is what the current act says.

A bank that loaned money to a plant could thus be sued and incur what would inevitably be very high costs. It is mainly to spare third parties, like banks and lending institutions, especially those that are able to finance the nuclear industry, that the bill was introduced. The purpose of the bill is to replace “any other person with right to or interest in, the affected land or place take the prescribed measures to reduce the level of contamination” by “any other person who has the management and control of, the affected land or place take the prescribed measures to reduce the level of contamination”.

This bill frees all third parties and lenders who finance nuclear energy, from any responsibility. What is being done through this bill is serious, all the more so when one thinks about all the doors that it will open for nuclear energy.

• (1755)

If the bill is passed, these legal entities would no longer have to clean up the sites contaminated by nuclear waste or the byproducts of nuclear energy exploitation.

It is not just a simple administrative amendment, as the minister would have us believe. There is a lot involved in this bill.

In fact, as the minister indicated in his press release, “Companies that own and operate nuclear facilities must have access to commercial credit to finance their needs, like any other enterprise”. This is where I have a problem.

Two elements caught my eye when I read this document, namely “finance their needs” and “environmentally-sound”.

It is a well-known fact that the current government, led in that by the Prime Minister, has always considered nuclear energy as an incredible economic development tool. Moreover, in terms of respecting its Kyoto commitments, the government is very favourable to this kind of energy

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But, as we know, nuclear energy is not clean. It produces so much radioactive waste that we do not know what to do with it anymore. Yet, the Canadian government thinks differently, despite all that we know and the current situation. This is very serious.

Indeed, it says on the Internet site of the Atomic Energy of Canada Limited, and I quote, “Nuclear energy is a clean, safe, and economical energy source that has many benefits, particularly in the areas of environment... It does not contribute to air pollution, global warming or acid rain”.

What a wonderfully incomplete propaganda tool. What Atomic Energy of Canada does not say is that we are stuck with over 20,000 tonnes of nuclear waste in Canada. This is serious. Do members know how much it would cost to get rid of it? It would cost over \$13 billion. This waste has a half-life of 24,000 years—and this will answer the question of the hon. member for Laval Centre—and they want to bury it deep in the Canadian Shield. As we know, three quarters of the Canadian Shield is located in Quebec.

They want Quebec to become a dumping ground for the waste of others. It is Canada that has nuclear plants. It is Canada that created these 20,000 tonnes of nuclear waste currently stored on the plants' sites.

This government agency is really not telling the whole truth to the public and it would have us believe this incomplete and misleading information.

• (1800)

Furthermore—

An hon. member: Oh, oh.

Ms. Jocelyne Girard-Bujold: Mr. Speaker, would you please call the Liberal member on the other side to order. He has not stopped heckling me for my entire speech. If he would like to speak, let him wait to have the floor.

Furthermore, we have to ask ourselves if nuclear energy is safe. The government, just like its engineers, claims that the Candu technology is the best. But is that true?

In a report aired by the French CBC on August 11, 2000, we learned that:

The Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission is concerned about the quality of the maintenance of the main reactor at the Chalk River plant, close to Ottawa. The commission fears that the departure of several experts and engineers in recent years may jeopardize the safety of the plant's operations.

The problem is that, in 1999, a great number of very well trained people have left the plant. The Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission has made an assessment and concluded that Atomic Energy Canada does not invest all the resources needed in replacement personnel training.

Since 1957, we have been relying on a system of on the job training.

Clearly what is happening within our nuclear plants makes no sense. The Bloc Québécois therefore proposes different ways for the government to deal with nuclear energy.

Recently, and it is important to remind the House of this; my colleagues have said this and I want to remind the House—the Bloc has proposed an investment plan of \$700 million over five years to encourage the development of a wind industry in Quebec. This plan

could help create more than 15,000 jobs in Quebec, mainly in the Gaspé Peninsula.

We know that we must help the people in the Gaspé Peninsula. We must help these people, and we know that the ideal place in Canada and in Quebec to invest in the wind industry is the Gaspé Peninsula, because of the wind, because of the unique sites there for this type of energy.

I remind the House that in 1997, in Kyoto, Japan, Canada undertook to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 6% compared to the 1990 level by the year 2008 to 2010.

For the federal government, the only alternative to clean and green energy is oil and nuclear energy. This is serious. It has put \$6 billion into the atomic energy program alone.

As for financial assistance to the fossil energy industry, since 1970—the Canadian people have to know this—the federal government has paid \$66 billion in direct subsidies to the oil and gas industry. By comparison, businesses in the renewable energy sector received 200 times less from the federal government, which gave absolutely nothing for the development of hydroelectric power—not one cent to Quebec—a type of really clean energy that produces no greenhouse gases and no radioactive material. Quebec has been developing this type of energy for more than 40 years.

This is why we believe that Canada should give up on the development of nuclear energy.

• (1805)

No wonder Canada lags far behind the leaders, with a production of only 207 megawatts installed. Even the United States has significant incentives, such as a subsidy of 2.7 cents per kilowatt-hour, to reach a capacity of more than 5,000 kilowatts-hour.

Quebec accounts for 50% of this production, which is minimal considering its potential.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Ms. Jocelyne Girard-Bujold: It is great to see that my Liberal colleagues are listening. I am very pleased. Congratulations and thank you.

According to the experts, Quebec's wind energy potential, concentrated in the Gaspé Peninsula and the North Shore, ranges from 4,000 to 6,000 megawatts-hour, which is about 60% of the total for Canada.

That is why the Bloc Québécois has always said that environment is important. We have caused enough damage to the environment; we must take immediate measures to protect the environment for future generations, for our children, our children's children and also for the present generations. Something has to be done; we have to go the way of renewable energy. Fossil fuels and nuclear energy must be abandoned.

It would be important to create industries manufacturing wind turbine components. They have a huge potential to make Canada one of the three best wind energy producers in the world. At present, this government is stubbornly staying the course of nuclear energy.

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Bill C-4, introduced by the Minister of Natural Resources, is more than an administrative amendment. It will bring about the further development of nuclear energy. This must stop.

The legislation allows for additional funding to develop nuclear energy. Enough is enough. The government must stop. I am asking it to withdraw Bill C-4. This legislation does not address the nuclear problem. It only allows its development.

The Bloc Québécois believes that the hazards associated with nuclear energy require tighter regulations than for any other type of energy.

The Bloc Québécois believes that if financial backers find this too risky an investment, there is no reason for society to react differently.

The Bloc Québécois believes that the government should focus its efforts on developing clean energy such as wind power.

Where energy is concerned, the Bloc Québécois demands, first and foremost, ratification of Kyoto, and I will vote for it.

I wish to move an amendment to the motion for second reading of Bill C-4. I move:

That the motion be amended by deleting all the words after the word "That" and substituting the following: "Bill C-4, An Act to amend the Nuclear Safety and Control Act, be not now read a second time but that it be read a second time this day six months hence".

• (1815)

The Deputy Speaker: The amendment is in order. Moving on to questions and comments. The hon. member for Windsor—St. Clair.

[*English*]

Mr. Joe Comartin (Windsor—St. Clair, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the British Parliament commissioned a study which has now been published. It looked at the requirements for energy in England from now until 2050. It looked ahead that far. It analyzed the needs. The report is quite extensive.

The same report proposed how that country would meet those requirements. It is broken down from the perspective of what it is going to do with its nuclear industry and fossil fuels. Most important, a time schedule has been set out for how it is going to replace those energy sources extensively, if not completely, over that period time with alternative renewable sources of energy. It is the most comprehensive plan I have seen for the whole of any country.

Would my colleague from the Bloc care to comment on the need for that type of a plan in Canada? More specifically, is that type of plan a good reason that we should not give second reading to the bill? Should we not give the government time to do that type of analysis?

[*Translation*]

Ms. Jocelyne Girard-Bujold: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague, the hon. member for Windsor—St. Clair.

Yes, it would be very important for this government not to act in a shortsighted manner in connection with nuclear development.

In the throne speech, the Prime Minister of Canada told us of his commitment to ratify Kyoto in the coming months. That is what he

said. How is it then that today he is allowing Parliament to debate a bill that would increase greenhouse gas emissions in Canada?

I do not know if the Prime Minister of Canada is aware of what is going on in this place at this time. I would ask him to listen and to tell his MPs, particularly his Minister of Natural Resources, to withdraw this bill.

Today it would be more important to debate the Kyoto protocol. Today, we, as parliamentarians, should debate that, instead of a bill that makes absolutely no sense, the purpose of which is to develop nuclear energy, which will add to the amount of nuclear waste. There are already 20,000 tonnes stockpiled at nuclear plant sites, and we do not know what to do with this waste.

• (1820)

The government will have to get back on track, stop telling us whoppers, stop telling us that it is going to do this or that and then do the opposite as far as Kyoto is concerned.

In response to my colleague's question, yes, this government needs to have a long term view of the situation as far as anything to do with pollution is concerned, anything to do with the agreements we made about ratifying Kyoto, because we made a commitment in 1990 before the world about ratification.

Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Jonquière for her remarks. She described very well the problem with nuclear energy. Being from New Brunswick, I am well aware of the situation at Pointe Lepreau, where we are in the process of deciding if the plant should be closed because of all the problems, especially pollution.

The same thing is happening in some regions of Quebec, the Gaspé for example, where many people from Atlantic Canada have settled, and also in Lamèque, in New Brunswick, and Miscou Island.

Has the time not come to develop new environmental-friendly technologies instead of giving the government new tools to make things worse for the environment?

Ms. Jocelyne Girard-Bujold: Mr. Speaker, the member is right and I urge the government to take his advice.

[*English*]

The Deputy Speaker: Before resuming debate, I just want to remind the House that now speeches will be 10 minutes without being subjected to 10 minutes for questions and comments.

Mr. Joe Comartin (Windsor—St. Clair, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in speaking to the motion to hoist the bill, I always accuse the government of being naive, but perhaps I was a little naive on this one.

Government Orders

In the last session we had the opportunity to see this bill in its prior incarnation as Bill C-57. As I was reviewing some of my notes for today, I looked at some of the comments of the member for Davenport. He asked his own government to take another look at this. My naiveté is that I thought the government might take another look at the bill over the summer and not bring it back, or if it did bring it back, it would be in a significantly different form that would not have allowed for the removal of the liability that extends presently under the act to people who are financing the development or rebuilding of nuclear plants in the country.

Perhaps this is asking too much of them, but I thought they might take a look at an overall comprehensive energy plan. That would have required them to look at the Kyoto protocol and map out in quite significant detail an implementation plan. In addition, it would have required them to do what England has done, which is to develop a long term energy policy.

There are two parts to that. It would require them to do an inventory of our energy sources in the country now, what we would continue to have from whatever sources, and then decide with very detailed recommendations any plan of how they would phase out heavy polluters such as coal and other fossil fuels, how they would phase out the nuclear industry over an extended period of time, and how they would phase in the available alternative sources of energy that require some technological development but in most cases simply need a plan of implementation.

On looking at experiences in Europe and other countries we can safely say that they are moving along those lines and are a decade to a decade and a half ahead of us. That puts us in a very bad position in terms of developing our technology as opposed to having to buy it from Europe or other countries over the next decade or two.

As I said, I expected that we would see some very extensive proposals and plans from the government. Obviously we did not get them.

The attack we have seen against Kyoto centres on the incompetency we are seeing from that side of the House. They are unwilling to face the reality that we need that type of long term planning and are refusing to carry it through. We hear the Prime Minister, for instance, saying that it is no big deal, that we have until 2012 to have the implementation plan in place. I do not know if he really understood how erroneous that was in terms of the requirements we have to meet under Kyoto. It is just dead wrong in a number of ways. We have to do a lot of preparatory work well in advance of 2012.

His comment a couple of weeks ago also reflects the attitude that this is something they will do, probably because of the political pressure in the country. However it reflects that the Prime Minister and the government do not care a lot about the quality of life we will live if we do not deal as quickly as possible with climate change and

global warming. It reflects a real unwillingness either to face that reality or to have the sensibility to understand the need to get started right away.

There is lot of criticism of the government. The start of this should have been four or five years ago when we first signalled that we would ratify Kyoto. We were the first country in the world to sign on and we are one of the last countries in the developed world, with the exception of the United States, to begin to deal seriously with the issues surrounding Kyoto.

One of the reasons this hoist motion should go ahead is that the matter would be put off. It would give them another six months to begin to deal with it. I would have expected as part of that plan that they would have dealt with issues around the subsidies to both the nuclear industry and the fossil fuel industry. They continue to be granted to the fossil fuel industry and the bill is a reflection of those subsidies.

• (1825)

I expected that we would have seen by this time a detailed plan of how in fact we are going to subsidize, provide incentives and give the creative juices in this country the ability to move to those alternative fuels that we so badly need. Again, we see nothing like that. It is a strong reason for putting off the bill. That would send a clear message to the government that it has to do this type of planning. It is not in any way simply a method of stalling out the bill. It really would be a serious message to the government to say that this is not the way to go.

Let me in the minute or two that I have left address one final point: the issue of privatization that the bill would permit and in fact encourage, specifically in the nuclear industry. We have seen just so many negative consequences of privatization in the energy field. We have seen some of it in our country. We now are experiencing it in this province. We saw it in Alberta and we will see more of it in the next few months and years. We saw it very extensively in the United States, particularly in California but also in a number of other states that had the same problems as they tried to privatize as well as deregulate the industry.

The bill should be pulled off the order paper, sent back for more work to be done on it and brought back in an entirely different format so that the issue of privatization would be addressed full on. This would make it very clear in our country that we are not in favour of privatization but that in fact energy sources and the energy needs of the country will be met by public bodies, not by the private sector.

The Deputy Speaker: It being 6:30 p.m., the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24.

(The House adjourned at 6:30 p.m.)

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