



CANADA

# House of Commons Debates

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VOLUME 135 • NUMBER 235 • 1st SESSION • 36th PARLIAMENT

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OFFICIAL REPORT  
(HANSARD)

**Tuesday, June 1, 1999**

**Speaker: The Honourable Gilbert Parent**

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# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, June 1, 1999

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1005)

[Translation]

### ORDER IN COUNCIL APPOINTMENTS

**Mr. Peter Adams (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table in both official languages a number of order in council appointments which were made by the government.

Pursuant to the provisions of Standing Order 110(1), these are deemed referred to the appropriate standing committees, a list of which is attached.

\* \* \*

### GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

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

\* \* \*

[English]

### COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

#### PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

**Mr. Peter Adams (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present the 76th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs regarding the membership of some standing committees, and I should like to move concurrence at this time.

(Motion agreed to)

[Translation]

## PETITIONS

### CANADA POST CORPORATION

**Mr. Ghislain Lebel (Chambly, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table a petition on behalf of those who delivers mail in rural areas. The petitioners ask that section 13.5 of the Canada Post Corporation Act be amended to allow them to organize and bargain collectively.

Canada Post Corporation is no better than the government. Over the past few years, it has racked up huge profits on the backs of the least fortunate, those who never have a chance to be heard.

• (1010)

This is why the present petition, signed by 113 persons, all from Quebec, asks the government to amend the Canada Post Corporation Act to restore some balance and allow these people to earn a decent living.

[English]

### CRIMINAL CODE

**Ms. Carolyn Bennett (St. Paul's, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition from over 25 people in my riding and other areas to end the legal approval of corporal punishment of children by repealing section 43 of the Criminal Code.

### VICTIMS OF CRIME

**Mrs. Karen Kraft Sloan (York North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have 2,096 signatures which call upon parliament to enact an amendment to the Criminal Code to enable victims of crime to lay criminal charges in Canada when a serious criminal offence takes place outside of Canada and when both the parties have Canadian status.

### MARRIAGE ACT

**Mr. Rick Casson (Lethbridge, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I am pleased to present the following petition which comes from concerned citizens in my riding of Lethbridge.

Decisions by the Supreme Court as well as recent pieces of federal legislation have placed extreme stress on the traditional

*Routine Proceedings*

definition of the family. The petitioners believe that the traditional family is the building block of society and call upon parliament to enact Bill C-225, an act to amend the Marriage Act so as to define in statute that a marriage can only be entered into between a single male and a single female.

The petition contains the names of 134 residents which brings the total number of names that I have received on this issue to 1,483, which I understand is about 8% of the total received by the government. I hope the government takes this into consideration.

## CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

**Mr. John Solomon (Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is my honour today to present a petition, pursuant to Standing Order 36, on behalf of constituents in Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre as well as citizens from Govan, Stoughton, Fort Qu'Appelle, Southey, Moose Jaw, Calgary, Edmonton and other places out west.

The petitioners believe that no parent should ever lose legal custody of their children by a legal process or be denied equal time. They wish to maintain a meaningful relationship with their children, unless found by due process to be unfit under the laws of Canada. No parent should be allowed to obstruct a child's relationship with the other parent or with other close family members unless that other parent or family member has been found by due process to be unfit.

The petitioners also believe that adversarial procedures should be avoided in favour of a more co-operative approach in divorce such as mediation and education in co-parenting.

The petitioners are asking the House of Commons to pass legislation as soon as possible incorporating these rights of children and principles of equity between and among parents. I support the petition.

[Translation]

## HOUSING IN NUNAVIK

**Mr. Guy St-Julien (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I table a petition from the Inuit community of Kuujuaapik, in Nunavik.

The petitioners state that there are 16 to 20 people in three bedroom dwellings in Kuujuaapik. The Inuit find the housing conditions at Nunavik extremely distressing. They consider the situation totally intolerable. It contributes to the high incidence of tuberculosis, infectious diseases and social problems.

The federal government must assume its obligations under the James Bay and Northern Quebec agreement as far as housing in Nunavik is concerned.

[English]

## ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

**Mr. Jerry Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have a petition signed by well over 1,000 residents in my riding requesting four things. First, that the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development reconsider her claim giving acres to the Caldwell Band in my riding. Second, that a cash settlement be made for the Caldwell Band. They certainly recognize the claim is there, but they believe that a cash settlement is the direction in which to go. Third, that Treasury Board not advance funding for the settlement of this land claim. Fourth, that consideration be given to the concerns of the local residents with regard to this settlement.

It is clear that there has been a tremendous amount of concern in my riding. I certainly endorse this petition coming forth to the minister and hope the minister will react to it.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

## QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

**Mr. Peter Adams (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Question No. 235 will be answered today.

[Text]

Question No. 235—**Mr. Eric Lowther:**

With respect to the Canadian underground economy, (a) what does the government estimate the size of this "non-reported" economy to be in monetary terms, and (b) how much federal tax revenue does the government estimate has not been collected due to the underground economy?

**Mr. Tony Valeri (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Finance, Lib.):** The Federal government is extremely concerned about the underground economy. It attacks the fairness and integrity of the tax system and makes it difficult for the government to raise the revenue it needs to pay for the programs and services Canadians want.

The government devotes resources to improve its understanding of the underground economy so that efforts at combating it are as effective as possible.

With respect to the size of the underground economy, the government has closely followed the work of academics and economic researchers. A key finding is that it is extremely difficult to measure the size of the underground economy. This is not surprising as by definition it consists of "hidden" economic activity. While several approaches have been developed to indirectly estimate this hidden activity, each has such serious limitations, limited confidence can be placed in the resulting estimates of the size of the underground economy and the associated revenue loss to the federal government.

*Government Orders*

The government has used the information obtained within its limitations to better focus its actions to reduce underground activity and recover lost taxes. Revenue Canada's actions in respect of the underground economy are an integral component of its balanced approach to tax fairness that dedicates resources to both facilitate compliance for taxpayers as much as possible while implementing responsible enforcement.

Revenue Canada has taken the following specific actions with respect to the underground economy: In 1993, 1,200 additional employees were assigned to work on the underground economy and the 1996 budget provided resources for an additional 800 auditors. More recently, the 1998 budget introduced a mandatory contract payment reporting system for the construction industry and federal government contracts, to encourage the self-employed to voluntarily report all of their income and to help Revenue Canada better detect unreported income.

The government will continue to both monitor and fight the underground economy through Revenue Canada's underground economy initiative, voluntary compliance programs and other enforcement activities.

[Translation]

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

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1015)

[English]

### CANADIAN ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION ACT, 1999

**Hon. Christine Stewart (Minister of the Environment, Lib.)** moved that Bill C-32, an act respecting pollution prevention and the protection of the environment and human health in order to contribute to sustainable development, be read the third time and passed.

She said: Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by saying that there were times during the odyssey of this piece of legislation moving through the House of Commons that I and a few of my other colleagues wondered if we would ever arrive at this day.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank you in particular, as well as the whips of the House for the very efficient way in which we dealt with the legislation at report stage last night.

Canada's first environmental protection act took effect in 1988. After a five year review of that legislation in 1993 by the then Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development, a considered government response and two presentations of amended legislation, we are close today to seeing a new Canadian environmental protection act passed through this Chamber.

The Senate will take its turn to review the legislation before it receives royal assent and is proclaimed law.

The current legislation which we are debating at third reading today was introduced in March 1998 and, as many in the House can attest, the challenges have been numerous and intense.

I would like to begin my comments at third reading today by thanking, first, my parliamentary secretary, the member for Burlington, for her diligence and commitment to the principles of the legislation and the legislative process. Her assistance has been invaluable.

Second, I thank all members of the standing committee for their persistence, especially my own caucus members who have worked with me to bring about some significant improvements to the legislation I introduced in March 1998. Thanks to their work, today we have a piece of legislation which is a significant improvement over the currently used CEPA legislation, new legislation of which we can all be proud.

Even the legislation we are debating today will be reviewed by parliament in five years and will once again be improved, for it is the role of ongoing science, the development of new insights, technologies and values, and the dedication of committed environment department staff working with society and parliamentarians which will create the demand for new improvements to legislation.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all of my officials in my department who helped us move the yardstick forward on this CEPA legislation.

What is the CEPA legislation all about? It is about protecting our environment and human health from the inherent negative effects of some substances currently in use today. The new CEPA legislation demands the screening of all 23,000 substances currently in use in Canada. The screening is to be completed in seven years.

For those substances found to be toxic, I will have the authority to require the creation and implementation of pollution prevention plans following a clear and predictable time allocated process. For those few substances found to be dangerously toxic, the legislation requires virtual elimination.

Today, of the 23,000 substances found in Canada, only 12 are considered to be dangerously toxic. Some, such as DDT, have been completely banned from use and production. Others, such as dioxins and furans, PCBs and hexachlorobenzene will be slated for virtual elimination.

*Government Orders*

The existing CEPA is based on the philosophy of pollution control. However, we know that it makes far more sense for industry to design its processes in ways that prevent pollution. It makes more sense to find ways to avoid creating waste in the first place than it does to figure out what to do with waste after it has been created, and it costs less too. We want Canada's industry to stop pollution before it happens.

• (1020)

Bill C-32 is on the leading edge of environmental pollution legislation worldwide. In fact, our review of similar legislation in the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, Sweden, the Netherlands, New Zealand and Australia shows that none of them address virtual elimination. Only Bill C-32 commits to the virtual elimination of the most dangerous toxic substances.

Most of the 23,000 substances in use today in Canada do not appear to pose any threats to our environment or health. Synthetic chemicals and metals are a basic part of our world today, essential to products which we all use. The precautionary principle applied to their use is another important aspect of Bill C-32. Too many substances have proven to have been found too late to have significant and negative effects on the health of people, other living creatures and our ecosystems.

Rachel Carson, in her book *Silent Spring*, drew public attention to the links between toxic substances and their effects on birds such as eagles and gulls. I note that *Time* magazine recently ranked her as one of the most influential 100 thinkers of this century.

Science is at the heart of the new CEPA. It instructs us on our environmental problems and guides us toward solutions. Under the precautionary principle we will listen to the evidence that science reveals, but we will not wait for full scientific certainty before we take action.

Recognizing that Bill C-32 was imposing important and new demands to achieve compliance, the federal government announced \$82 million in new funding in the budgets of the last two years in order to support our commitment. Last week I announced \$11 million in project research funding from a \$40 million research initiative looking into such key areas as endocrine disrupters, persistent organic pollutants, metals in the environment, urban air quality issues and the cumulative effects of toxic substances. A further \$42 million will help us to manage toxic substances, including their assessment, regulation, tracking and enforcement.

In summary, we are determined to protect the health and environment of Canadians, for it is Canadians at the community level who are most affected by pollution. This bill obligates the government to provide more information to Canadians on pollutants, using vehicles such as the National Pollutants Release Inventory and the Environmental Registry on the Internet.

We are also expanding the mandate for increased public participation in other ways in this bill. We want to open the door for people to have the right to sue if there has been significant harm to the environment and they feel the federal government has failed to enforce this law. The legislation incorporates whistle-blower protection to employees and gives peace officer status to environmental inspectors.

This legislation enhances the intergovernmental partnership that we have already built in Canada. It ensures that aboriginal governments are participants in those partnerships and it values the traditional aboriginal knowledge that they will bring.

The new CEPA provides me with the authority to set engine emission standards for new vehicles and for other types of off-road engines, such as lawnmowers, generators and boat motors.

Bill C-32 reflects the evolving state of Canada's international environmental commitments. We will be able to step in to require pollution prevention plans to control Canadian sources of international air and water pollution. This legislation also gives us the legal authority to fulfill our obligations under a range of recent international agreements such as those that address hazardous wastes and the import and export of hazardous substances.

Through the bill's legislative process the government has successfully introduced 90 amendments and fully supported 60 other amendments made by the committee. The report stage amendments which I introduced are ones that serve to ensure internal consistency of the bill. They would ensure a proper degree of clarity throughout the act. They would respect existing ministerial responsibility because protecting the environment and the health of Canadians is a shared responsibility.

All of our polling indicates that Canadians care deeply about their environment, about the quality of the air they breathe, the water they drink, their land and healthy ecosystems.

• (1025)

Bill C-32 will enhance Canadians' confidence in government oversight, control and protection of their environment and health from the effects of toxic substances. Our children's future security and well-being and our environmental health will be significantly improved with the passage of Bill C-32. In passing this legislation we all can be justly proud of our contributions to an important piece of legacy legislation that we leave as a building block to a cleaner, healthier and safer future.

**Mr. Rick Casson (Lethbridge, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise in the House today to address Bill C-32. We have been working on this bill for an awfully long time. There has been an awful lot of input from the many, many people who came forward. It is nice to see it come to fruition.

*Government Orders*

The environment issues facing us today are being addressed somewhat in Bill C-32, which deals with pollution control and human health. That encompasses almost every activity that takes place on this planet. Every morning when we get up and take a deep breath we are helping to pollute the air.

Regulation is needed and it has to be done in a balanced way. That is something that we tried to do, to keep that idea of balance.

I would like to ask for unanimous consent to split my time.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Does the hon. member have the unanimous consent of the House to split his time?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** There will be two 20-minute segments. The hon. member has 19 minutes remaining.

**Mr. Rick Casson:** There were hours and hours of committee meetings. We heard witnesses from across Canada in all sectors of society. The clause by clause process was excruciating. I believe there were 560 amendments. When the bill came to the House there were an additional 230 amendments. The minister just mentioned how many were supported by the government. Many of the amendments were supported and presented by members of the Reform Party.

All through this debate there have been predictions of dire consequences if we do not toughen up the environmental protection act. To some degree, I suppose, they are right, but I believe that in many instances they go too far. A critical balance between activity and regulation has to exist, because if it gets out of whack either way it is harmful.

The bill gives the government the authority to research 23,000 toxic substances and to clarify what these substances do to mankind, to life in general and how they affect human health. We heard a lot about hormone disrupting substances during this study, as well as endocrine disrupters, gender benders, or whatever we want to call them. Our party supported more research in this area. We really have to know what the effects of these toxic substances are and we need to spend the time to find out.

To confirm problems we have to be able to find out the scope of what is happening when an action is taken and what is the reaction to that action. Canadians want to feel that government is working toward solutions which will improve the environment. That is something which all members of the House tried to work toward in this bill. We did it in our own different realms, but we all had the same focus in mind. That is what Canadians are expecting from us and that is what they should expect. The bottom line is a safer environment and sustainable development.

Getting a little more close to home, last Sunday morning I was able to take a drive out to the country to have a look at my farm and

the crops. It is nice to be able to go out in the countryside at this time of year to see what a wonderful country we have. The crops were in. The ground had been tilled. It had rained and it smelled fresh and just looked wonderful.

• (1030)

I must acknowledge that there are many areas in Canada where this has not happened. My colleague, our agriculture critic and many others realize that there are areas in Saskatchewan, Manitoba and other places in Canada where the crops are not in. The ground is too wet and they are still struggling in that regard.

To get to the point where the agricultural community can seed its crops a lot of work needs to be done. The soil has to be worked. Fertilizer has to be applied. In some cases chemicals are applied. In all instances every operation that takes place is very expensive. Chemicals and fertilizer are expensive.

For the best results the right amount must be applied. This is done through soil testing and other methods. I believe this is what needs to be taken into account when we talk about toxic substances. If they are used, if they are needed in manufacture, let us make sure the management of these substances is done properly and there is the minimal amount of exposure to Canadians.

Even in the preparation of the soil it should not be overworked and put into a state where erosion can take place. This is something we have learned over the years. We want to do as little as possible to alter the natural state of our environment. I believe, especially in the agricultural community, we are starting to see the results of science, study, and tremendous work such as that done at the Lethbridge research station. We have started to produce more per acre than we have in years past. Over time the products we are producing will be more environmentally friendly and more useful to mankind.

A lot of care and planning is used, always with the goal in mind of preserving if not improving our environment and producing more and more on the same land base to feed a growing population. This must continue and I am sure it will.

As lawmakers we need to support Canadians by having laws that will assist our agricultural industry, our manufacturers and others to provide food and the necessities of life in a way that Canadians find acceptable and which reduces harm to the environment.

We have always to keep in mind sustainable development, the environment and human health because they have to be considered in any development. As well social and economic aspects have to be taken into account. It is important to take into consideration the impact on society or on the development of a decision.

We must use sound science and research to achieve laws and regulations and we must back them up with enforcement. We have

*Government Orders*

learned through this process, through the environment committee and witnesses, that in some areas our enforcement is in dire need of a tune-up. It is not happening. It is not being done in a way that is congruent or in any planned fashion.

Environment Canada needs to have a look at its resources and direct them to the areas which need the most attention. Departmental review and putting emphasis where the emphasis is needed have to be done on an ongoing basis.

We have done a lot in the House recently, albeit not enough because of the time allocation that has been put forward. Hundreds of hours of committee work have been done. I would suppose it involved millions of dollars in wages, work and support for all the people who appeared before us and the people who work for them. We must keep in mind the expectations of Canadians. We need workable and enforceable regulations.

To be in Canada at this time of year is an absolute treat. We live in a great country, especially in the spring as we see things come to life, as we see wildlife such as the pair of geese with their goslings that I saw the other day, as we see blooming gardens, fruit trees coming around, crops going in, birds coming back and singing in our communities. It is just great.

• (1035)

It is important that we work in an effective manner to preserve the country for generations to come. The member from the NDP says consideration in the aboriginal sense is seven generations. We have to look at how any action that is taken by their people will affect seven subsequent generations. That is a good rule to follow.

I attended a high school graduation on the weekend and saw the excitement, the hopes and the dreams of the class of '99 as it goes out into the world. I reminded the students that they needed to pay attention to the environment.

The education aspect of environmental protection is important. All Canadians have to be aware. I have great hope in future generations. They are very much aware and will do a better job than we and previous generations have done in preserving the environment and making the country a far better place in which to live.

All in all this time of year is very exciting. Canada is one of the most pristine places on earth and we need to work to keep it that way. We have made mistakes in the past and unfortunately we may make mistakes in the future. We have to limit those mistakes and continue to make headway. We have to be sure that we sustain life and human health and develop in a way that accomplishes that. Certainly young people are very concerned about the environment. They are very much aware of it.

Different parties have brought forward different philosophies which sometimes do not lend themselves to full co-operation but allow for debate to be broadened to include how we as Reformers

and how other parties feel about the environment. The bottom line is that we appreciate what we have in the country but we need to work very hard to preserve it.

To make sure people understand I would like to indicate that we support sustainable development, which is human activity that combines economic, social and environmental considerations without compromising the well-being of existing and future generations. This is very important. We support the participation of effective local communities in environmental decision making.

We always talk about residual powers in the provincial and municipal governments. They were discussed quite a bit in committee. Who has the ultimate power? We feel that the federal government has to be involved in the environment. We believe constitutional challenges have stated such. However, the provinces, municipalities and all Canadians also have a duty to perform.

We support the rationalization of federal and provincial environmental laws and the development of regional and national environmental standards where appropriate. We also support integration of social, environmental and economic objectives into the management, philosophy, structure, procedures and planning where the federal government has constitutional jurisdiction.

If we take what we believe in and support each party's philosophy and policies, it will go a long way to creating a tremendous environmental protection act.

We support federal leadership for a commitment to sustainable development, including the creation of partnerships with provincial governments, private industry, educational institutions and the public to promote meaningful progress in the area of environmental protection. This is where strong research is involved. We must get everyone involved in getting the facts laid out for Canadians to consider and in bringing government, industry, community groups and municipalities into the fold to come up with the best possible balances.

We also support the principle of establishing and regularly reviewing standards based on sound science which are technically and socio-economically viable.

• (1040)

We also support the removal of administrative and regulatory fiscal practices that discourage or detract from environmental responsibility. I suppose that is coming at it from another way, that all regulations should be looked at from the point of view of their environmental impact and how they will affect the world in general.

We also support the continuing development of commercially viable practices for the management of the environment. We support the development of reasonable endangered species legislation, and I could go on.



*Government Orders*

In committee and in the House our party has tried to put forward the best balanced approach which we feel will do the most in the end for the protection of the environment.

In conclusion, this will be the last time I will get to address Bill C-32 in debate. I will probably get involved in questions and comments a little later. Going through this act has been an experience I will never forget. Hopefully at the next review there will still be a few of us here.

**Mr. Bill Gilmour (Nanaimo—Alberni, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, basically my colleague has reviewed our party's position. I would like to trace how the Canadian Environmental Protection Act came to be and some of the problems we have had with the bill as it moved through the House.

The Canadian Environmental Protection Act was originally brought to the House in 1988. Part of that legislation, which I think was extremely helpful, indicated that in five years time the bill would come back to the House for review. That is what happened. Unfortunately it has taken about five years to reach today.

In Bill C-74 in the last parliament the government brought forward what it thought was the answer to reviewing CEPA. It brought forward some amendments. There were some flaws in that bill and it never reached the House in its final form. In this parliament the government again brought forward the new Canadian Environmental Protection Act.

In the view of the Reform Party it was a well balanced act. It looked after the needs of Canadians as well as the needs of a healthy environment and the needs of industry. It was a well balanced act which then went to committee.

The problem was the make-up of the committee. If either side of an issue, either the hang them high side or the other side, is loaded in any committee, the result will be skewed legislation. If the fisheries committee is loaded up with a bunch of fishermen there will be a skewed result.

Unfortunately there was not a balance in the environment committee. There were 560 amendments before the committee in an attempt to bring the legislation back to where it was in Bill C-74, which did not pass in the last House. All of us in the House have spent thousands of hours collectively in committee dealing with the bill.

When it came back to the House it was a bill that even the government could not live with. Another 235 amendments were introduced at report stage, with which we dealt yesterday and in the weeks before, to bring the bill back to basically where it was when it was introduced over a year ago. This involved a lot of time and a lot of energy.

This is not a shot at any of the people on the committee, but I think it is a shot at the government. A requirement of committees

should be balance right across the board. Whether it is fisheries, justice or environment, the make-up of a committee should be balanced. In my view the environment committee was not balanced, which caused excessive hours of work on the part of all members and staff.

• (1045 )

The staff behind the scenes basically spent a year keeping this process going. It was extremely frustrating at times for all of us. I would hope that in the future this could be avoided by having a balance of each committee across the spectrum.

It was unfortunate that yesterday there had to be time allocation on this bill. We were already at the seventh group of motions. We could have had eight. There were only eight groups. Basically it could have gone through. It is unfortunate after all the time we have spent on it that we did not have the opportunity to at least voice our opinions in the House. Then Canadians could have heard the different views and aspects each member had.

When my colleague was talking about the graduation ceremonies, he commented that most Canadians are environmentalists. The younger people are much more environmentally friendly and environmentally conscious than my generation. This is healthy.

We have a grand country. We need to look after it. This bill does that. Three of the five parties in the House will support the bill this evening I believe. It is a bill that in my mind hits the balance. I know others will say that it is not a balance. We can have a vibrant and healthy environment and a vibrant and healthy economy. They are not independent. They can be together. That is what this bill does.

In conclusion, we will support the bill this evening. It has taken a long time to get here. As I said at the beginning, one of the strong points of the last bill was that it came back to the House. This bill will also come back to the House in seven years. There will be an opportunity to refine it and to move it along so that it remains timely and current.

The member for Davenport has initiated a very timely review on pesticides. Part of the problem is we are dealing with pesticides that were registered 30 years ago and are out of date. By coming back to the House in seven years the bill will move with the times. It will be current.

We support the bill. We look forward to seeing its passage through the Senate and becoming law.

*Government Orders*

[Translation]

**Ms. Jocelyne Girard-Bujold (Jonquière, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to seek unanimous consent of the House to split my time with the hon. member for Louis-Hébert.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Does the House give its consent for the hon. member for Jonquière to divide her time?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Ms. Jocelyne Girard-Bujold:** Mr. Speaker, we have now reached the third reading stage of Bill C-32.

We are at this stage because the government has decided once again to put a gag on a bill, in order to push its interests ahead of any others, without any consideration for the arguments of the opposition parties.

It is very important to give an overview of the events leading up to Bill C-32. On December 15, 1995, the Liberal government proposed revising the Canadian Environmental Protection Act.

The proposal by Sheila Copps, the minister of the environment at the time, was the government's response to the fifth report—

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. member knows very well that she must not refer to a member by name, only by title. I hope that she can comply with the rules in this regard.

**Ms. Jocelyne Girard-Bujold:** This announcement by the minister of the environment at the time was the government's response to the fifth report of the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development, entitled "It's About Our Health—Towards Pollution Prevention".

• (1050)

At the time, the Bloc felt that a majority of the report's recommendations supported the centralizing tendency of the federal government in environmental protection matters.

The Bloc Québécois refutes the theory of the double safety net and contends that the environment would be better served if responsibility for its protection were given to one level of the government only.

The Bloc Québécois firmly believes that the provinces, including Quebec, have greater knowledge of the specifics of the natural environment and are in a position to arouse the interest and encourage the participation of local residents, are more open to the claims of environmental groups, are able to conclude significant agreements with national and international partners and have

indicated their desire to find solutions to environmental challenges and to contribute actively to sustainable development.

Our position remains unchanged. Bill C-32 was tabled at first reading on March 12, 1998. It renewed the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, formerly Bill C-74, which died on the order paper with the last election call. It was, moreover, a promise in the Liberal Party's red book.

At this stage of Bill C-32, it is important to underscore for the federal government the reasons why Quebec refused to sign the harmonization agreement of the Canadian council of environment ministers. With what we have just seen in recent days, Quebec's decision seems to validate them even more. Canada wants to go it alone, without giving any thought to the responsibilities afforded the provinces.

At the meeting of the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment of January 29, 1999, the Quebec minister of the environment, Paul Bégin, refused to sign the agreement so long as the conditions set by Quebec were not met by the federal government.

These conditions include among others recognition of Quebec's exclusive or at least primary jurisdiction in the areas assigned to the provinces by the Constitution. They also include the firm commitment by the federal government to pass the legislative amendments required, and of course the adoption by Quebec and the federal government of a bilateral agreement on environmental assessments.

Moreover, Minister Bégin also stressed that the declared intentions of the federal government as to the review of the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, which would lead to a significant increase in federal powers, contravene the spirit and objectives of the environmental harmonization negotiation process, particularly that of preventing duplication and intergovernmental disputes.

This position of Minister Bégin reinforced the position taken by the Bloc Québécois in its dissenting report of December 1997.

On November 20, 1996, the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment agreed in principle to the Canada-wide environmental harmonization agreement and to two subsidiary agreements on inspections and standards. The subsidiary agreement on environmental assessments was negotiated during the winter of 1997.

This agreement was to enhance environmental protection in a sustainable development context, while respecting each government's jurisdiction, in a more effective way. It was to have contained the general principles to be implemented more specifically through subsidiary agreements.

The Bloc Québécois has always supported harmonization between the federal and provincial governments when it would serve to eliminate administrative and legislative overlap and duplication between the two levels of government.

We therefore supported environmental harmonization so long as it did not serve to screen the federal government's continued meddling in provincial jurisdictions.

• (1055)

It is essential that harmonization recognize the exclusive or primary jurisdiction of the provinces in the areas entrusted to them by the Constitution. The spirit of harmonization must be reflected in the changes the federal government is making to existing legislation.

Several recommendations were made in committee to improve this bill. I will mention a few in the course of my speech.

The committee recommended that ratification of the agreement and the three subsidiary agreements be postponed, first until all documents, namely the agreement and the 10 subsidiary agreements proposed, were available so the public would have a real opportunity to contribute and, second, until the committee's concerns and recommendations had been fully considered.

The committee also recommended that the consensus requirement in the agreement and subsidiary agreements be replaced with a two-thirds majority vote.

With respect to these two recommendations, the Bloc Québécois believes it is premature for the federal government and the provinces to endorse the harmonization agreement and subsidiary agreements, and for the committee to report to the House of Commons, because we have not had the opportunity to observe any real desire on the part of the Liberal government to harmonize with the other provinces.

It would be better to wait until the endangered species bill, the fisheries bill and the Canadian environmental protection legislation have been introduced. We will be able to fully assess the harmonization agreement when considering these bills.

Also, before considering any new subsidiary agreements, it would be better for the federal government and the provinces to deal first with the three existing agreements on environmental assessment, inspection and standards. In addition, we are proposing that the agreements be ratified by a unanimous vote instead of a two-thirds majority vote.

In another recommendation, the committee suggested that a provision be included in the environmental assessment agreement stating that it will not require any changes to the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act. The subsidiary agreement will also have to specify that the objectives and requirements of the

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environmental assessment must meet the strictest standards and must meet or exceed the prescribed objectives and requirements.

This recommendation is contrary to the principles of the general agreement, which states that governments may change their respective legislation as required.

Finally, the Bloc Québécois believes that only the Quebec environmental assessment process should be applied in Quebec. The federal government's willingness to achieve harmonization is supposed to be reflected in the legislation, and we consider that Bill C-14, an act respecting the safety and effectiveness of materials that come into contact with or are used to treat water destined for human consumption, does not reflect this spirit of legislative harmonization between the federal government and the provinces and represents another intrusion by the federal government in an area under provincial jurisdiction.

Therefore, the Bloc Québécois is of the opinion that several recommendations in the Liberal majority report are contrary to Quebec's historic positions in the area of federal-provincial harmonization and that recent interference by the federal government does not respect the spirit of the accord.

What the Bloc Québécois deplores is that the federal government refuses to give legislative expression to its good intentions with regard to environmental harmonization and chooses instead to hide behind the centralizing screen of the Supreme Court of Canada.

Need I remind the House that consideration in committee of Bill C-32 began in the fall of 1998 and concluded in April 1999?

• (1100)

The bill was studied over the course of some 60 sittings, and 580 amendments were introduced. The Standing Committee on the Environment and Sustainable Development therefore broke a record for the length of time any bill has been studied in committee.

The committee adopted about 160 of these amendments. All of this work seems to have been cancelled out by a government that is blowing with the wind, without any consideration for the environment. As a result, the bill now before us is inconsistent in many regards.

It must be kept in mind that many amendments were added in committee, but this government has decided either to not even consider them, or to alter their meaning and substance. It is somewhat ironic to think that a process this lengthy has culminated in a gag order from the government and major changes to what was done in committee. It is clear that the government has not respected what was done in committee.

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I will now address the two main changes made to the bill at committee stage, which were not respected by this government. First of all, a new definition of virtual elimination in clause 65 has been adopted.

Clause 65 now reads as follows:

—virtual elimination means, in respect of a toxic substance released into the environment as a result of human activity, the ultimate reduction of the quantity or concentration of the substance in the release below the level of quantification specified by the ministers in the list referred to in subsection (2).

This new definition allows the federal government to change the limit according to the ongoing changes in scientific tests and measurements. The ministers are the ones to draw up the list of levels for each substance but they must take into consideration all pertinent social, economic and technical factors.

We could see there was a problem of harmonization among the various provisions in the bill relating to virtual elimination. The new definition has not been uniformly applied to all clauses concerning this issue. Accordingly, the Bloc Québécois proposed amendments to respond to these inconsistencies in Bill C-32.

Second, the committee eliminated all references to the cost-effective measures the government was to take under Bill C-32. The committee based its decision on the fact that the government did not want to explicitly define the word “cost-effective” in the bill.

In the face of this legal void, the committee decided it was simply preferable to eliminate the term, considering that, in the context of sustainable development, it is understood that governmental measures are to be cost-effective. In addition, federal departments are already subject to Treasury Board policy on the cost-effectiveness of federal regulations.

The Bloc Québécois wanted to make changes to the bill, which were not passed either in committee or at the report stage in the House. One of the main changes concerned the systematic presence of an agreement with the provinces prior to federal intervention.

Moreover, under the original version of Bill C-32, the federal government was going to act in accordance with the intent of intergovernmental agreements. The Liberal majority softened this requirement by adding the word “endeavour” before the verb “to act”. The Bloc Québécois maintains that the federal government must always keep in mind the prospect of harmonization with the provinces, to avoid duplication and overlap in the legislation and regulations.

By trivializing federal-provincial harmonization agreements, the Liberal government clearly shows that it lacks the will to respect the jurisdiction of the provinces with regard to the environment. The Bloc Québécois therefore proposed the deletion of the word “endeavour”, as Bill C-32 currently stipulates, but to no avail.

At clause 9, the bill provides that:

9.(1) The Minister may negotiate an agreement with the government . . . with respect to the administration of this act.

However, the Liberal majority on the committee decided to make this agreement subordinate to the new clause 9(9), which would trivialize any future equivalence agreement with the provinces.

● (1105)

Clause 9(9) reads as follows:

No agreement made under this section shall limit or restrict the carrying out of any action the Minister deems necessary for the administration and enforcement of this Act, including the conduct of possible inspections or investigations.

With this clause, the federal government is giving itself the powers to go over the heads of the provinces, even after reaching an agreement with a province. This is totally incomprehensible and unacceptable on the part of a government that claims to want to work in partnership with the provinces.

While in theory Bill C-32 recognizes the environment as a shared responsibility between the federal government and the provinces, in reality, this bill does not delegate any power to any province, including Quebec, which, of course, is contrary to what true environmental harmonization between the various levels of government should be.

Bill C-32 confirms that, with the latest supreme court ruling on environmental matters, the federal government is trying to broaden its powers in this area. Although the federal and provincial governments share responsibility for the environment under the Constitution, the Liberal government clearly wants to subordinate the role of the provinces to that of the central government.

The emphasis is on pollution prevention as a method of priority intervention with the power to require pollution prevention plans, which are mandatory for substances included in the list of priority toxic substances and optional for others. A direct partnership must also be developed between the federal government and industrial sectors that are already partly covered under Quebec programs, such as the industrial waste reduction program that has been implemented in the pulp and paper industry.

The measures contained in Bill C-32 will allow the federal government to establish national priorities for intervention. Therefore, the provinces will have no choice but to adopt federal regulations, otherwise they will be forced to see the federal government serve the same clientele.

The legislative and regulatory powers that the federal government is giving itself are very important. While the Liberal government constantly talks about its willingness to work in partnership with the provinces, it nevertheless institutionalizes its powers in

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order to play a paternalistic role towards the provinces. That is one thing the Bloc Québécois deplors.

The Liberal government's claims about the importance of a national approach to environmental protection are contrary to the spirit of environmental harmonization. It is sad that the supreme court is further contributing to the Liberal government's centralizing tendencies.

Finally, and contrary to the Liberal government, which argues the notion of the double safety net, two levels of government acting within the same jurisdiction, the Bloc Québécois feels that this system diminishes the accountability of both levels of government by seriously complicating the assignment of responsibility.

The Bloc Québécois is opposed to the bill because, in addition to imposing a centralist vision, the federal government is making a grab for new powers and is interfering in provincial jurisdictions, when what it should be doing is working to further harmonization among the various levels of government.

**Ms. Hélène Alarie (Louis-Hébert, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I feel it is rather special and significant to rise in this House during Environment Week to speak to Bill C-32.

Bill C-32, which proposes to renew the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, is now at third reading. We are opposed to this bill because it has all the aspects of a centralizing legislation and neglects certain areas of jurisdiction we find it very important to defend.

I will begin by congratulating the hon. member for Jonquière for the work she has done on this issue. After 60 sittings, the clause by clause study of the bill by the environment committee, 580 amendments were introduced and 160 of them passed. Much work was done in the standing committee on the environment, but with dubious results. One must wonder why so.

• (1110)

Because only one-quarter of all those amendments were retained, and in many ways the result has been a kind of patchwork.

The bill has its inconsistencies, but what is even more troublesome is the lack of harmonization between the provinces and the central government. This lack of harmonization results in duplication and in overlapping legislation and regulations.

The environment is an intrinsic part of the lives of every person in this country, for it affects us all. Whether it be water, land or air, we all depend on these three elements. Harmonization is necessary

so that everyone may feel a part of a large-scale project to make the environment healthier.

We have reservations about this bill because it denies the basic principle whereby the more people, municipalities and provinces involved, the greater the chances of interesting results.

The inconsistency in this bill leaves us perplexed, and I might add that the lack of harmonization and of agreements with the provinces may be very costly for the country. I am not inventing this lack of agreements, because I read the commentary from the Office of the Auditor General of Canada, which provides clearly that federal-provincial agreements on the environment do not provide the results expected. It basically says:

The audit revealed that key elements of agreements were simply not implemented. In certain cases, the federal-provincial committees that were to manage agreements were never set up. In other instances, the federal government lacked the information it needed on provincial activities in order to be able to determine whether federal regulations had been applied.

So, where do we go with results like that? It is rather embarrassing. In his report, the commissioner recommends that Environment Canada assess existing environment agreements and incorporate the lessons learned into new agreements.

The government has not advanced very far, if you want my opinion, and the Bloc Québécois recognizes that the federal-provincial agreements on the environment are not perfect. They must be improved. That is vital. They are, however, an improvement over unilateral action by Ottawa, as proposed in Bill C-32, given the benefits of eliminating overlap and establishing a single window.

These are the recommendations of the Bloc Québécois. They are not to be found in text of the bill. These are good reasons to oppose it.

I would like to continue my speech to cover three areas: the agri-environment, biotechnology and air pollution. We are trailing somewhat in agri-environmental projects, and I will quote from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada documents to show what the government is looking for in this area.

The document entitled "The Health of Our Soils" states in essence:

In the context of sustainability—which is what the environment is all about—land management means that the land is used so as to maintain productivity without exhausting the resources or adversely affecting the environment. This type of management implies a change of mentality and attitude.

The soil should be considered like a bank account. If we treat it like an inexhaustible resource, that is if we constantly withdraw money from our account, we will exhaust our reserves. On the contrary, if we use appropriate stewardship and renew the resources used, our account will continue to be balanced and to provide a good return.

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Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada supports sustainable land management. Productivity, stability, protection and viability, these are the pillars of the approach suggested to preserve our land.

• (1115)

We are proposing a comprehensive agricultural plan. What does this mean? First, we should make an inventory of the operating resources and practices, and then answer various questions.

These questions include the following: Does the farmer participate in a government agricultural plan? From what source does the farmer get the information on which he bases his decisions? Does the farmer have resources that he is currently not using? What obstacles impede the use of soil conservation methods?

As for this year's proposal by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada with respect to soil health, I am delighted to say that Quebec has already been practicing this for several years.

An example is the agro-environmental portrait of farms in Quebec: 17,937 of them responded to a request from their union to analyse their operations. This represents 88% of farms invited to participate. This is a first in Canada, in Quebec and in the world. This is where the commitment to saving our farms, our soil and our environment must begin.

By agreeing to answer questions about their practices, producers have shown that they are genuinely interested in protecting their resources. Anyone familiar with this sector will know that farmers are not necessarily thrilled about answering such questions. Farming practices are always kept secret.

This response was an indication of a growing awareness that the future of generations to come depends on each one of us. I keep mentioning harmonization, decentralization and the need to work together. This is the only way to obtain results.

The farms surveyed were those affected by the regulations on reducing agricultural pollution, as well as apple growing and greenhouse growing operations. This was a large step forward and will be pursued. With results, one does not need to talk through one's hat, but can implement specific measures that are often very effective and much less costly.

I wanted to mention this project because I believe it is very important. Some of the federal-provincial arrangements for agriculture are very interesting. Minister Rémi Trudel said that the agro-environmental plant health strategy support program was developed as a result of the Canada-Quebec agreement on the St. Lawrence Vision 2000 action program. This five year program has a yearly budget of \$2.5 million.

Its purpose is to support technology transfer and development projects dealing with major crops, such as potatoes and apples. Its goals are very straightforward: to reduce pesticide use by 50% and

put 70% of cultivated land under integrated pest control. This is a tall order.

Having worked in this field I know how difficult it is to convince people to take part in this kind of initiatives. They have to completely change their farming practices. However these are concrete measures. Out of 49 projects submitted for 1998-99, 37 got accepted, and partners are contributing financially to the study.

Projects are based on local needs and linked to strategic teams' action plans. Because they are simple, these projects are useful, and people get on board. They are called pesticide free and pesticide reduced projects. They give a lot of visibility. These technology transfer and development projects deserve to be better known.

In Quebec we had the Green Plan and technology transfer committees. In 1997 the Liberals did not renew the only program through which the federal government was funding agri-environmental projects. The agricultural component of the Green Plan expired on March 31, 1997 and nothing replaced it. This is regrettable because these initiatives produced very positive results.

• (1120)

I said I would also address biotechnology, because the essence of the Group No. 3 motions is to remove the powers of the Department of the Environment and the Department of Health to give the governor in council the exclusive responsibility for decisions on biotechnology projects concerning animate substances.

Biotechnology is on everyone's lips and a major source of concern to many. Its results are often very interesting, but sometimes also very worrisome.

In February of this year, the federal government decided to renew its biotechnology strategy, which dates back to 1983. Last April, the Standing Committee on Agriculture undertook to hold hearings on agricultural biotechnology.

It subsequently tabled a report entitled "Capturing the Advantage: Agricultural Biotechnology in the New Millennium". The fifth of its sixth recommendations addressed the necessity for parliament to undertake a review of the Canadian policy on labelling with the participation of all the stakeholders.

The official Canadian government response to the agriculture committee was as follows "Canadian policy provides for consumer choice by allowing food companies to voluntarily label whether or not their products have been derived from biotechnology".

By allowing free choice to everyone, we end up without a code of ethics and also without labels for products derived from biotechnology. The Bloc Québécois is in favour of a complete re-examination of labelling policy, particularly where genetically manipulated foods are concerned.

The applications of biotechnology are multiplying constantly and at an increasingly rapid rate. We therefore feel it is necessary to address this important matter more seriously, with a view to keeping an eye on the changes that are affecting our lives at present and those that will do so in future.

I do not know if my colleagues experience the same thing but, almost every day, I receive letters from people in every region of the country, including western, central and eastern Canada. These people say "We realize that genetically modified products in foodstuffs are here to stay. In that case, the label should tell us what is in the food item, because we want to preserve our health and the health of our children".

I want to add something about biotechnology. There are some rather disturbing things going on. Members are all aware of the cloning of goats by a company called Nexia. Such cloning raises once again the ethical issue relating to that procedure. These goats were cloned by using a technique similar to the one used with Dolly the sheep, in 1997. The same DNA was used in what was the first stage to develop a spider silk called biostyl from goat milk.

This scientific breakthrough generated admiration, but also concern in Canada. It may mean that it is probably not that difficult to clone human beings. Fortunately, we just learned that Dolly is aging twice as rapidly as she should be. This may make cloners think twice.

When Nexia officials appeared before the Standing Committee on Agriculture, we asked them "Do you have a code of ethics? How do you operate? Is there an international or national code of ethics?" They told us, literally, that they were voluntary members of the Canadian Council on Animal Care. This is like saying "The humane society will give you an outline of the course of action to follow. Comply with it". This makes no sense, from both a scientific and human point of view.

In my opinion, this makes for a rather dangerous situation.

• (1125)

I will cut short my comments on this issue, because the hon. member for Palliser already said a lot about biotechnologies and I agree with the warnings he gave.

I now come to my third point, which is air pollution. I have another document on the quality of the air that we breathe. I did not get my information from just anybody. It is from the Department of Agriculture and Agri-Food, so we can all relate to it.

This document deals with how we manage our lands and produce food and fibres. This is not negligible in the context of air pollution.

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Atmospheric pollution has a direct effect on all plants and animals on the earth, as does the climate, which governs productivity, human activity and the arrival of catastrophes such as droughts, floods and storms.

Some atmospheric changes may be inoffensive or even beneficial to humans and plants. However others are disastrous, and their negative effects will be felt ever more frequently, unless we change our way of managing our energy, our food and our fibres.

In Bill C-32, the government does not act on recommendations from another federal government department, when in fact it should. The government would be advised to refer to biological agriculture. There are no codes yet on biological agriculture, and I think they will be a long time coming.

I will close by mentioning another article which I read in the document "Taking our Breath Away: The Health Effects of Air Pollution and Climate Change" published by the David Suzuki Foundation.

It contains some very interesting points, such as the following:

According to a recent opinion survey, pollution, including air pollution, is Canadians' main health concern, and Quebecers are worried about it most—

I am not inventing this, I read it in the David Suzuki Foundation document.

as was demonstrated by over 800 people attending a recent forum in Montreal.

Quebecers' interest in this area should not surprise us. Air pollution and climatic changes make victims of the people of this province and cost their health care system dearly.

Air pollution kills prematurely some 4,000 Quebecers and 12,000 other Canadians every year.

Higher temperatures, climatic changes and the ozone layer are the focus of the Kyoto commitments and underlie the changes that we should be making.

I am not satisfied with the motions presented and passed with respect to Bill C-32 on agriculture, biotechnology and air.

What we must remember is that the environment is not a government matter, it is an individual matter. Without a solid partnership and a solid harmonization agreement, we may not achieve our objectives and the primary goal—that of saving the planet.

[*English*]

**Mr. Rick Laliberte (Churchill River, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to clarify our role as Canadians and to highlight the whole journey of getting the Canadian Environmental Protection Act to where it is now at third reading.

I would first like to say that we were quite discouraged with government members during the voting last night and with Reform

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members who voted with the Liberal cabinet in support of watering down environmental protection in the country.

One of my hon. colleagues said that the youth of the country and the world are very cognizant of the environmental damage that the industrialized revolution and the industrial ways of living have diminished our health and our environment. They are very conscious of changes that have to be made. The youth are telling us this.

We have received letters in these last few days and hours telling us that a mistake was made last night in watering down the environmental protection of the country. Then an hon. member said that there was a mistake, that when the standing committee was formed and the way it did its parliamentary duties was overly environmental.

• (1130)

To Canadians, the youth who are listening, environment is life. We live off this land, off this water, off this air. If we do not protect our environment, there is no future for us.

In industry, trade and manufacturing, people make their daily profits while they pollute and put their garbage into our environment. It impacts on us. If we want these people to sit on our environment committee and empower it on a balanced situation, future generations will struggle.

Our youth are environmentally conscious. They will dominate this House of Commons. They will dominate all committees, including the industry committee and the trade committee. Youth are our future.

Last night we made a major mistake. We watered down this country's basic environmental protection law by adopting amendments that were proposed by industry. The Reform Party was lobbied. The Liberal cabinet was lobbied. The parliamentary secretary and the ministers were lobbied. They buckled and they watered down our environmental protection act. It is the third reading debate today and the vote will be held tonight.

I want to put some quotes on the record and I will submit them to the Clerk. This letter which was circulated highlights the key problems with Bill C-32 as revised by the committee. The committee worked on this for years under public review. In its report "It's About Your Health", the standing committee made its recommendations to strengthen pollution prevention, not pollution control or pollution management, but pollution prevention, to stop pollution.

This is what industry had to say about the committee's work:

Application of virtual elimination. For reasons that are unclear to us, the Department of Environment proposed to the committee significant changes to the virtual

elimination construct initially proposed in Bill C-32. The new construct changes the virtual elimination definition so that it is now based on achieving releases below the limit of qualification, and incorporates two distinct measures to achieve virtual elimination:

The release number should be set by the governor in council and not by the ministers alone—

Virtual elimination planning based on achieving below limits of qualification releases is faulty public policy as it is fraught with operational uncertainty and would impose a huge regulatory overhang without any demonstrable reduction in environmental or health risks.

Virtual elimination is a working qualification that we can continue to pollute to a measurable amount in this country. The minister will allow these limits.

In the preamble of the bill we wanted to have a phase-out of the toxic chemicals and toxins in this country. We wanted to phase them out. We did not get that in the operational side of the bill but we were successful in getting it in the preamble. The front side of the bill says that we want to phase out eventually; the operational side says that the minister recommends virtual elimination.

What happened after the industry put its foot down in sending out these documents is that "achieving virtual elimination" in the bill has been taken out. It is only "limits of qualification will be set by the minister".

This country is in a loophole. Canadians want to phase out chemicals and toxic substances. The government says we will virtually eliminate. Industry says just set the limit and let us continue to do our business. This whole issue of pollution prevention has been eliminated, completely phased out from Bill C-32 as it is before us.

I would also like to highlight that the integrity of the standing committee has been tested not only by industry but by this government and the minister. The minister challenged us that in committee we should not change major clauses in the bill. We made changes and she put forth many amendments to repeal the changes.

• (1135)

In terms of getting even, so to speak, she also put an amendment that the next review of Bill C-32, the CEPA, would not be exclusively done by the House of Commons Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development. The exclusive review could be taken by the committee responsible in the other place. The Senate could review the next bill if it is approved. That is a major detriment.

I raise this issue for all hon. members, my colleagues to my right, who speak on behalf of seeing an effective and elected Senate. All members should be aware that the Senate does not have



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the exclusive right. It does not have the democratic representation to review these acts.

This country has a process for creating acts and laws. The House of Commons standing committees have the first right to make recommendations and review ministerial drafts. Then the bill goes through this House before it goes to the other place. This process could be sidestepped with the amendment that was introduced last night and which is now in place. I draw this to the attention of all parliamentarians.

Another issue I raised and which the hon. minister highlighted was scientific certainty. Cost effectiveness was a major concern for industry, that any measure taken to protect our environment should be cost effective. The committee had eliminated this. It was brought back in with an amendment by the Reform Party and the Liberal cabinet. They want cost effective measures to ensure that industry has the profit driven derivatives as a priority over the environment and the health and safety of Canadians. Cost effective was a major battle in committee and inevitably industry won.

The other side of scientific certainty is aboriginal traditional knowledge which is a bold inclusion, but there is an oversight. We introduced an amendment yesterday which was defeated. Aboriginal people are not defined in the bill. We put forward a constitutional definition of who the aboriginal people are: the Indian, the Metis and the Inuit of this country, but the amendment was not approved.

A lot of the aboriginal people in this country have lived a sustainable life on the land. Their intrinsic knowledge is oral based. They know the plants, the animals, the waters and the effects on the environment. All of this is an oral based tradition. It is not a science based tradition. Giving that equal weight is a bold move under CEPA. We encourage that.

A huge group of aboriginal people have been taken out of the definition. The Metis have been overlooked under the Indian Act, under the land claims and again under this bill. It would have been an opportunity for them to contribute to the betterment of our environment. We wanted to raise that issue.

Another amendment that was soundly defeated last night was the protection of our children. We asked that CEPA consider the child specific reviews, studies and assessments of the toxic impact on our children in the school yards, at the beaches, in the parks, in the many shopping malls and playgrounds they frequent. These are child specific areas. We asked that Environment Canada and Health Canada specifically study what impacts those areas.

A child's growth is more vulnerable than that of an adult with an immune system that is well in tact. Children are still developing and toxins such as endocrine disrupters impact on them. If they are exposed at the wrong time at the wrong place the effects could be detrimental.

• (1140)

Public participation is certainly a big section in this bill, but the public right to know and the public right to sue have been watered down because of industry's interests of cost effectiveness. If any toxins were released into our environment, the minister would have to prove the industry had knowingly polluted before she could publicly sue. In terms of a loophole somebody could simply say that they did not know they were polluting. That would eliminate all the laws put forward in CEPA. "I did not know I was polluting" could be a statement of defence that would let every polluter off the hook. Any cost recovery required by the minister would not carry any weight.

The issue of biotechnology was highlighted in the bill. Under the committee process we empowered the environment and health ministers to take effective decisions on biotechnology. It is a growing and very cautious industry. It is also a very non-transparent industry. Industry and government are at one end of the issue and the public and consumers are at the other end. Government has to protect the public and the consumers, not just the needs of industry. We wanted the Minister of Health and the Minister of the Environment to look at the public interest.

In terms of biotechnology we are going to be exposed to organisms that have been altered genetically in our food, in our environment, in our bodies. The wish of the industry lobby all along has been to have these issues considered and the decisions made by the governor in council. Then industry would have a small group of people to lobby. The cabinet ministers are a small group and they would be an easy target, but to lobby the 301 MPs in this House is too much of a task. This parliament has lost its power by giving the governor in council too much decision making on biotechnology which is a growing issue.

In terms of the whole issue of the governor in council and the industry lobby, the precautionary principle was a major concern for industry. I quote from the section on cost effectiveness:

The original bill generally incorporated the notion of "cost effectiveness" in a number of sections (Administrative Duties, Information Gathering provisions and Pollution Prevention Planning provisions) and these references have been systematically deleted by the Parliamentary Committee. The Committee has also introduced provisions into the Administrative Duties section . . . that require the government to consider the benefits of taking environmental action, do not require it to consider the costs and even specify that if there are no benefits identified, this should not stand in the way of taking action. This creates an imbalance in the Bill that is inconsistent with the principles of sustainable development whereby environmental, economic and social considerations all have to be integrated. The original balance in the Bill needs to be restored by reinserting the previous references. . . to actions having to be cost effective.

Ladies and gentlemen, parliamentarians, cost effective—

**The Deputy Speaker:** I know the hon. member intends to refer to Mr. Speaker rather than to ladies and gentlemen in his speech. I know that was his intention and I would invite him to comply with the rules in that regard.

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**Mr. Rick Laliberte:** Mr. Speaker, I am consumed by this emotional debate and I tend to forget to look at the Speaker. Sometimes it is Madam Speaker or Mr. Speaker and that is to whom I was referring.

In highlighting the interest of cost effectiveness and balance we have to look at the beneficial side. Some of the initiatives taken under the precautionary principle can lack scientific evidence and certainty. We cannot balance everything through a cost effective screen. We have to look at the beneficial screen.

Some of the beneficial screens might be for children's health. It might be that the plastics in soothers or the nipples of bottles are not safe. This is a very small population compared to the adult population of the world. However, if we do not look at the benefits of introducing measures for this small, susceptible subgroup, we cannot go forward and say that the sustainable development of the country and the world is protected under the bill. Everything is measured under cost effectiveness and we cannot accept that. We did not accept it last night and we are not prepared to accept it tonight.

• (1145)

In the past week we have received evidence from the Commissioner of the Environment that the Liberal cabinet has taken the environment issue very lightly. Since the 1993 election we have seen evidence of a decline in the program review of the Department of the Environment. This department has gone from one of the top ten departments in the country to being one of the last. Even ministers do not want to become the Minister of the Environment.

This is a far cry from what the new millennium should be. We should be preparing the environment for the future of our children. We should be empowering the Department of the Environment to be holistic in its cabinet affairs. It should be part of the social caucus and economic caucus. However, it is being shoved to the side and belittled every day.

Today we are discussing the pesticide issue. One of the major goals of the pesticide industry is to support and protect industry in the country. However, its first goal should be to protect our health and our environment. We cannot water down our responsibilities.

This all goes back to cost effectiveness. If we put cost effective measures in the environmental bill nothing could take place. We could end up with an economic disaster in the future if cost effective screens are not in place.

The unfriendly environmental lobby that has taken place in the last few days was certainly successful in getting the votes. However, I want to put on the record, for parliamentarians and Canadians, the letters that were submitted to us. People can see that the changes made in the bill reflect the needs of industry not the needs of Canadians or the environment.

**Mr. John Herron (Fundy—Royal, PC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak to final reading of Bill C-32, an act respecting pollution prevention and the protection of the environment and human health in order to contribute to sustainable development.

The bill has come a long way from its first reading back on March 28, 1998 and I believe it faces a long road ahead in the Senate. The environment and sustainable development committee spent eight months alone hearing witnesses and reviewing the proposed amendments in an attempt to improve the bill. However, there is still a lot that can be done to make pollution prevention the cornerstone objective in the act.

Eleven years ago in 1988, the Canadian Environmental Protection Act was first introduced by the Progressive Conservative government. It was a significant part of our environmental record and part of over a decade of environmental progress from 1984 to 1993.

While the government promised "A Liberal government will lead in protecting the environment" in the red book, the truth of the matter is it has never had a plan to turn that promise into action. This was empty election rhetoric coming from a party that no longer has any credibility on this file.

It has taken six long years to get this significant piece of environmental legislation to third reading. It had to get there by invoking the dreaded debate killing, time allocation hammer, something the government has done 53 times since it has taken office in 1993.

• (1150)

One wonders what the Liberals are afraid to hear. I have news for them. There was no need to kill the debate. The secret is already out. Canadians already know the government does not intend to put consideration of the environment and human health first. There is no need to pretend any more or to make any other promises. The truth of the matter is that Canadians do not expect leadership on the environment from the Liberal government.

Last year's report tabled by the Commissioner of the Environment stated:

Vision and leadership are the two essential ingredients for tackling environmental challenges that face the government. . . While Canada has demonstrated vision, it is failing in implementing it. . . The government is not keeping the promises it makes both Canadians and the world.

The government's lack of commitment to the environment is painfully obvious to Canadians. Part of the problem is reflected in the cuts to the environment ministry budget and human resources. It has gone from being the eighth largest department when the Progressive Conservative Party was in government to the smallest now of all 21 departments.

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In contrast, our decade of governing is marked by significant progress on the environmental agenda. We established a strong national voice for the environment and showed world leadership on sustainable development.

Let me take a moment to remind Canadians what environmental progress really sounds like. It was the government of the Progressive Conservative Party, the party of Tom MacMillan, Lucien Bouchard and Jean Charest, three consecutive environment ministers, which actually played a significant role with respect to the environment.

The Progressive Conservative's initiatives included developing international leadership known as the Montreal protocol. This led to the international community signing an accord to eliminate or phase out ozone depleting gases. Canada was a principle player in this 1987 accord.

The Conservatives also eliminated lead in gasoline. They signed an air quality accord with the Americans to control international air pollution. Perhaps the achievement I am most proud of is the signing of an acid rain protocol with the Americans to ensure that factories located mainly in the United States do not contaminate the rivers, lakes and ponds located primarily in eastern Canada. We did that by doing one initiative first: we cleaned up our own act at home.

The Conservatives also set up a UV advisory program. They eliminated the excise tax on methanol and ethanol in blended fuels. They signed a revised Great Lakes water quality agreement and introduced the first CEPA, the Canadian Environmental Protection Act. As the member for Davenport pointed out in committee, it was a pioneering bill in 1988. It is the principle bill for control in the use of toxins in the environment.

During the time we were in government the Prime Minister was once quoted saying:

At an unprecedented rate, we are stripping the earth of its forests, washing away its soil, creating vast deserts, eradicating untold species of plants and animals, despoiling our oceans and poisoning our skies.

Elizabeth May, director of the Sierra Club of Canada, wrote an article on June 22 of last year saying:

Five years after he (Brian Mulroney) resigned as Prime Minister, I think of the amazing pace in environmental progress made by his government. Those days are long gone.

The Sierra Club of Canada stated in its Rio report card last year the following about the Liberals:

—with this sixth set of marks for performance by the federal government in meeting its Rio targets, it is clear that environmental issues have never been at such a low point on the political agenda.

I will now draw on the history of the Canadian Environmental Protection Act. The original CEPA was a pioneering bill enacted to control the adverse effects of toxins in the environment; a concern first highlighted in Rachel Carson's thought provoking novel *A Silent Spring*. CEPA also included the need to review the bill and its effectiveness after five years. This progress began in 1994.

The first stage was an extensive review by the environment and sustainable development committee. Its findings, detailed in a document entitled "It's about our Health", reported 141 recommendations for the government to consider in drafting the revised bill.

The government responded in December 1996 with Bill C-74, a piece of legislation that was so flawed and raised so much controversy that the government elected to let it die on the Order Paper at the dissolution of parliament in 1997. Some individuals are concerned that this may actually be the fate of this particular bill should the House prorogue this fall.

• (1155)

The government decided to try again by tabling Bill C-32 in April 1998, 10 years after the passage of the original act. It is simply amazing that it has taken the government 11 years to get here and it still does not have the full support of the House for the bill. I would like to point out that it does not even have the full support of its own caucus.

When the bill was sent to committee, it had a possible record number of amendments put forward for discussion and debate. Some 400-plus proposed amendments were examined over a period of eight months.

**Ms. Paddy Torsney:** Five hundred and sixty.

**Mr. John Herron:** As the parliamentary secretary has pointed out, 560 amendments were actually tabled with respect to Bill C-32. I will take the opportunity to point out to the parliamentary secretary that alarm bells should go off in people's heads. If there are 560 amendments to a particular piece of legislation before we actually get a chance to review it clause by clause, maybe the bill is just a little bit more flawed. If the parliamentary secretary wants to feed me a bit more information throughout my speech perhaps she can actually help me to bring those points forward. I am very appreciative of her comments.

**Ms. Paddy Torsney:** There were 150 government amendments.

**Mr. John Herron:** The parliamentary secretary again chooses to be an asset to my remarks by saying there were 150 government amendments. After six years of being in government and two tries

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at actually doing the five year review of the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, what did the government have to do? At the eleventh hour, 911 environmental management, it had to put another 150 amendments at the clause by clause stage. I was actually shocked to hear about that.

In six years the government has not had one piece of environmental legislation. It had two cracks at CEPA and it was still trying to amend it.

I know that you, Mr. Speaker, were paying attention last night when we voted on the report stage of the Canadian Environmental Protection Act. Not only was the government doing 150 amendments at the clause by clause process, it was still adding more at the report stage. I am shocked. I do not know exactly what is going to take place.

A lot of the amendments came from a number of individuals who are concerned about the environment. We had an environmental coalition at committee in order to try to ratchet up the environmental protection aspects of the bill to protect the environment and human health.

I would like to pay tribute to the members for Churchill River and Jonquière, critics from the NDP and the Bloc, who worked with the Progressive Conservative Party and some very devout, environmentally conscious members of the Liberal Party who sat on the committee. Those individuals were the member for Davenport, the member for York North and the member for Lac-Saint-Louis. I think Canadians should pay tribute to their personal sacrifices in that regard. We know they took a fair amount of political heat from their own party members for their support in trying to ratchet up the protection aspects with respect to human health and the environment.

During the review process I asked the Minister of Health if he supported the provisions in the bill which would enable him to control endocrine disrupters. The parliamentary secretary said that I had prejudged the clause by clause process. Perhaps at that time I had prejudged it. Upon review, I may have actually had a bit of foresight in terms of what was going to happen at the clause by clause study.

What worries me is the fact that the parliamentary secretary responded to that particular question. There are two co-sponsors of the bill: the Minister of Health and the Minister of the Environment. However, the Minister of Health chose not to respond to that very important question which indeed has human health aspects involved.

I do not believe for a minute that the Minister of the Environment, the member from Northumberland, and the government lack the political will to address the environmental concerns in terms of what we were trying to do at the committee and what her strong officials were trying to do at the departmental level. It is not her political will by any means. I think it is the political will of the government.

• (1200)

The fact that the Minister of Health did not respond to that question sends a signal to me. He is a primary player in cabinet. For him not to respond to that question, and to allow the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, who was quickly on her feet, to respond, makes me think, if he really is the co-sponsor of the bill, why would he not defend the quality of the bill with respect to human health and the environment.

The reason, as most members of the House and the media have seen over the last number of weeks and months, is that this bill is under attack from all sides. Whether they be environmentalists, concerned Canadians or industry advocates, this bill has made absolutely no one happy, especially before it went through the clause by clause process.

The fact is that the government made the Minister of the Environment bear the brunt of the political pressure on this issue all the way along. The Minister of Health was absent and, to a large degree, the Prime Minister was absent as well.

Yesterday when the Prime Minister responded to my question in question period concerning the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, it was the first time he had stood to respond to a question with respect to this bill. The members for Churchill River and Jonquière, as well as myself, have asked a number of questions with respect to this bill. I know the critics for the Reform Party have asked questions, but still we have only had one response from the Prime Minister.

If we can do one thing for Canadians, we need to find more political support for the Minister of the Environment so that she will have more clout and more of her cabinet colleagues will pay attention to this very important file.

Never in my short time in elected office, in my lengthy parliamentary career of about 23 months, have I ever witnessed such flagrant attempts by the government to deny the parliamentary process the chance to operate and I hope I never see it again.

The member for Lac-Saint-Louis, a former environment minister for the province of Quebec and a former parliamentary secretary to the minister of the environment, was repeatedly denied access as a voting member of the committee. If we review the transcripts of the committee we will see that this situation came up time and time again. He brought to the table a wealth of knowledge and experience, and the committee in many cases relied upon his wisdom and guidance.

Instead, during the excessive eight month period it became a challenge for the government to fill its needed nine committee seats with anybody but the member for Lac-Saint-Louis. Other Liberal members used the clause by clause process to catch up on correspondence, read the newspaper and even take a nap. It was the "anybody but the member for Lac-Saint-Louis campaign", where

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even the government's deputy whip had to take her seat at the table when no other caucus members came forward to fill the much needed nine spots. All the while the member for Lac-Saint-Louis, rarely missing a meeting, was continuously told he could not participate. He could participate in discussions only. He could not move amendments. It is obvious the government was afraid that his amendments might succeed in making significant improvements to the bill.

Despite those attempts, in some cases we succeeded in improving the bill. The government is now obliged to gather information on endocrine disrupting substances. This would not have been included in the act had it not been for the pressure placed on the government to recognize the harmful effects of these dangerous substances. It was a small victory for the environment and human health.

I would like to point out that it was the definition of the member for Churchill River which was accepted under the information gathering clause of the bill. It was his amendment, the amendments of the Progressive Conservative Party and those of the Bloc as well which challenged the government to put forward its own definition. I am proud to say that it was the NDP definition that actually carried the day at the time.

Maybe that is how the political system is supposed to work. Something was left out of the bill, the opposition parties challenged the government to include something, and it was added. In that aspect I maintain a degree of faith in the system.

Canada is already a world leader in research on endocrine disrupting substances. The strong definition and enshrined research clause that obligates the minister to act will set a new standard for other nations to measure against. However, a significant shortcoming is that we have no means to ensure that the ministers will act upon any of their findings.

The precautionary principle has now been institutionalized in the administrative duties section of the act. This means that the minister will carry out his or her responsibilities in keeping with the precautionary principle where absence of clear science will no longer be a reason to postpone action. This was first included in the Rio declaration, a document our government fully endorsed in 1992.

• (1205)

The act includes provisions allowing for civil suits. Individuals can now hold industries accountable for failing to abide by the law. This is an initiative brought forward by the government and I applaud its initiative in that regard.

The legislation also includes provisions for pollution prevention plans, which was another initiative by the government, to challenge industries to ensure that their actions do not have a harmful effect on the environment and on human health. This is a voluntary

scheme that promotes pollution prevention by requiring certain industries to publish plans in order to curtail releases into the environment. The affected industry is then left to find a workable solution to the problem. If it does not, the minister is empowered to act.

A pollution prevention plan is really a voluntary regulation. The government can say to industry "You know your industry better than we do. We want you to control the releases that your process is causing". In that regard, if a pollution prevention plan does not do the job, the government is empowered to bring forth regulations. It is a very valuable concept for the government to work in conjunction with industry, but industry must know that the government can act.

For the most part, individuals who work in industry understand that it does not matter how much money they make because, ultimately, if we cannot drink the water, breathe the air or live in the environment, it does not make much sense. Most industry officials subscribe to that concept, but it is up to us to ensure that we challenge them not to cheat in that regard.

I am also concerned about the residual nature of the bill. I would have preferred that the Minister of the Environment, the Minister of Health and one other minister would have the capacity to make a decision which would apply with respect to overlap and duplication as opposed to going to governor in council. I think that would have been a better option.

We supported the virtual elimination definition that was brought forth in Bill C-32 before the clause by clause consideration. We thought it was a very workable definition. It should not have been changed in the first place, but I am glad that we reverted to it last night.

It is our intention to support Bill C-32 tonight. We think it augments what the 1988 CEPA did. It is an improvement with respect to the precautionary principle, citizen suits, et cetera. However, having said that, there is still room for improvement.

**Ms. Paddy Torsney (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of the Environment, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the member opposite has made a number of claims which I could probably spend at least 10 minutes refuting.

He indicated in his comments that pollution prevention under Bill C-32 would be voluntary, which of course he knows is incorrect; it would be on the authority of the minister.

He also references Elizabeth May, who worked for a Conservative member, so that is always an interesting critique of this government.

Specifically he mentioned that this bill is not green enough. I wonder how he can say that when he voted for some amendments and introduced other amendments at report stage which were not

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environmentally friendly. How can the member stand and say that this bill is not green enough when he would have seen significant changes that would have altered this bill to make it less environmentally friendly?

**Mr. John Herron:** Mr. Speaker, I will address the last issue which the member brought up first, which concerns the amendments on virtual elimination. I think those are the ones she is referring to.

• (1210)

In fact, the government brought forth its own definition which did exactly the same thing and it supported its own amendment. It is already on side. I hope the hon. member is not admitting that the government lacks environmental conscience in that regard.

With respect to pollution prevention plans, I would say that she is 100% right. They only come into play at the request of the minister, but it is a voluntary initiative whereby the minister can say "Hey, you guys tell us how you are going to clean up your act. If you don't, we will do it by regulation". I did not mean to say anything different in that regard.

Elizabeth May, who is a leader of the Sierra Club, has not necessarily been the Conservatives' best advocate, but she has pointed out that when she compares our record to their record, there is no contest. Ours wins every time.

**Mr. Werner Schmidt (Kelowna, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member made quite a point of saying that this process has been undemocratic and that the procedure followed by the committee was undemocratic. I think he is a person who would advocate justice, ensuring that the decisions which are made are based on rational, good, solid scientific evidence.

The hon. member said something to the effect that this bill does not require, in every instance, a basis on scientific fact. On what basis would risk assessment take place if, in fact, it is not required that it be based on science? Is he suggesting that perhaps certain political, capricious or spurious reasons could be introduced to declare something to be environmentally damaging? What would be the basis on which a risk assessment would be done?

**Mr. John Herron:** Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member has brought forth a very constructive question. This is an issue on which members of his party and our party do not exactly agree.

We do agree on this issue, that science should be what drives the decision making process as to whether a government should act in a particular circumstance. Science should be number one. However, when the science is headed in a very clear direction, and when we think that the use of a particular toxin or a particular process is causing harm to the environment or human health, the government should not have to wait for the last *i* to be dotted or the last *t* to be crossed before taking action.

We do not necessarily agree on that particular point. We support the precautionary principle. If there is doubt, the government should be concerned with the environment and human health first before every *i* is dotted and every *t* is crossed. The government supports that concept, as do we. The Progressive Conservatives support that concept, as well as the NDP and the Bloc. With respect, I invite my friend from the Reform Party to embrace that aspect of the precautionary principle.

**Mr. Rick Laliberte (Churchill River, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to raise a couple of questions. One deals with the beginning of the act and the other with the end of the act.

I would ask the hon. member how he could support the bill as it is. At the beginning of the bill, the preamble, which was amended last night, removes the phase-out period for toxic chemicals. The hon. member knows that highly toxic chemicals in this country do not require virtual elimination, they need to be phased out. The world is working toward that, but Canada will not be.

At the end of his remarks he talked about democratic integrity and that the integrity of the standing committee should be respected. It was not when all of these amendments were passed last night.

Also, at the end of the bill it states that the next review could be done exclusively by a Senate committee. I do not know if he understood that last amendment.

The phase-out aspect and the review this of bill are very crucial.

**Mr. John Herron:** Mr. Speaker, I think it is a shame that the term "phase-out" was taken out of the preamble of the bill. We support the concept of virtual elimination. Having said that, the intent, the language and the spirit of the bill must embrace the concept that those most toxic substances that exist should not exist. When we are considering PCBs, DDT and those sorts of things, we need to empower the government to be able to completely phase-out those kinds of substances.

• (1215)

The system we use is a risk based system. That is how we manage our toxins. We need to embrace the concept of virtual elimination as long as we are challenging industry on an ongoing basis.

The word phase-out primarily addresses, as the member for Churchill River knows, issues such as POPs. We should not send a negative signal in that regard. It was an excessive reaction to a concern of industry. It was concerned that the virtual elimination concept could be changed in that regard. The minister should have the power in certain circumstances to make a call.

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With respect to the humanitarian review of CEPA, whether it is done in the Senate or the House my biggest concern is the fact that it be done in a timely manner. We are reviewing CEPA 88 in 1999, some 11 years later.

The member raised another issue with respect to the Senate. I categorically support an elected Senate in every way, shape and form. The concern of many Canadians is that by allowing only the Senate to review something, it is being given to an unelected body. Until we have an elected Senate we actually water down the credibility of any parliamentary review which takes place, despite the fact that the senators engaged in the issue may be making a very valuable contribution on behalf of Canadians.

The alarm bells go off when it is given to an unelected body, which is something the country is ready to address and should address well into the future.

**Mr. Peter Adams:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order to advise the House that throughout this debate Liberal members will be splitting their time.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Yvon Charbonneau (Anjou—Rivière-des-Prairies, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we are in the final hours of a four-year debate on Bill C-32.

When the time has come to pass a final and overall judgment on a bill, there are two ways to go about it: compare the proposed legislation to the most desirable ideal legislation, or compare the proposed legislation to the current act.

In the first instance, obviously there is a tendency to bemoan the fact that such or such an amendment was not passed because it would have improved the bill. In the latter, the question is whether the bill before us contains enough improvements to justify its being passed.

I will not keep members guessing any longer. I am one of those who will support Bill C-32 because, in my view, it represents a marked improvement over our current environmental act, despite a few uncertainties.

With regard to Bill C-32's renewal of our fundamental environmental act, it goes beyond pollution control, focusing essentially on its prevention.

It takes direct aim at toxic substances through the virtual elimination of those most harmful to the environment and health. It focuses on the cautionary principle. It sets out a tighter and more efficient process for the evaluation and management of toxic substances. Also it improves the control of pollutants and certain waste categories. It strengthens enforcement of the act by giving public servants the same authority as a peace officer, fostering and encouraging public participation, and better protecting whistleblowers.

Finally the bill deals more adequately with new realities such as biotechnology and long-overlooked historical realities, namely our relations with native peoples.

Since the original Canadian Environmental Protection Act was passed in 1988, our vision of the environment has become broader and richer. We have entered the sustainable development era or, more specifically, a time devoted to the research and development of an integrated management model for our habitat and resources, which will gradually enable us to integrate environmental concerns into our economic and social decisions both domestically and internationally.

● (1220)

In this regard, Bill C-32 is a real step forward, as witness the fact that the environment and health ministers will no longer have sole responsibility for the quality of the environment.

Many other ministers, and often cabinet itself, will have to appreciate the importance of a number of complex situations affecting exports, international air and water pollution, aquaculture and biotechnology. This sharing of responsibilities is the only hope for the long term success of government management of sustainable development.

I would also point out that the bill creates a framework that will allow the federal government not only to exercise its public health responsibilities but also to strengthen the necessary co-operation with other levels of government.

This bill contains dozens of clauses requiring the federal government to consult its partners, but it also provides that, after two months, the government must act in the public interest with respect to pollution problems, which cannot wait for the Canadian constitution to change.

The House has listened to a series of speeches from the Bloc Québécois suggesting that the federal government is bulldozing over everything in its path with respect to the environment, when what it is in fact doing is negotiating with the provinces harmonization agreements that Quebec is refusing to sign.

To hear the Bloc Québécois tell it, the federal government should not be allowed to exercise its research, planning and regulatory responsibilities. It should not be allowed to draw up a list of priority substances, or a national inventory of toxic substances, or take action with respect to exports, biotechnology, aquaculture, fuel, and so on and so forth, without the agreement of the provinces.

Internationally, there is a consensus. Environmental issues require increasingly close co-operation between countries but, if we are to believe the leading lights in the Bloc Québécois, interprovincial boundaries and constitutional arguments here in Canada would take precedence over our primary responsibility, which is to manage our habitat safely for our own good and for the good of our descendants.

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Personally, I am pleased that Bill C-32 provides a framework that will allow the federal government to exercise sound leadership in a spirit of active co-operation, not sterile discussions and apathy.

Earlier, I mentioned that Bill C-32 also raised some uncertainties, which I want to discuss. I am taking this opportunity to emphasize the tremendous work of my Liberal colleagues who sit on the standing committee, and also the positive contribution made by several members of the opposition, who showed great tenacity regarding these issues.

These issues include the following: What would be the effectiveness of the very complex procedure governing the establishment of the priority list? Will the Minister of the Environment have the necessary resources to do his job within the prescribed timeframe? What will be the true priority given to the prevention of pollution control in the strategy to enforce the act? What will be the true priority given to the principle of caution when facing partially unknown situations? Will the use of cost effective measures make the situation so complicated that it will prevent the required actions from being taken? What will be the strategy of the industry lobby: will it fight tooth and nail or will it try to find ways to make businesses more environmentally friendly, while also making them more profitable?

As for the government, there are also questions that need to be asked: will the Ministers of the Environment and Health be given any more support by their economic colleagues in cabinet? Will those colleagues have an enhanced sense of responsibility as far as our resources are concerned, both economically and internationally? Finally, will the provinces really co-operate? Will the public reap the benefit of the new means at its disposal and require all the transparency and stringency of application this renewed legislation needs?

These are all questions the bill does not, and cannot, provide answers for. These are questions that time and people of good faith will answer. People like ourselves, in their businesses, in their roles as elected representatives at other levels, in their roles as public servants, or merely as enlightened and critical citizens, will decide that environmental management is a true priority and that it is worthwhile pursuing a societal model with sustainable bases and perspectives.

• (1225)

In closing, I would like to congratulate the Minister of the Environment for successfully bringing this bill to maturity. I would also like to thank all those who contributed to the drafting and passage of this bill, whether behind the scenes or in more public roles.

[English]

**Mr. Peter Adams (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I

listened with great interest to what my colleague had to say. I think I missed a small part of what he said about the matter of the responsibility of ministers other than the Minister of the Environment, and I think he mentioned the Minister of Health.

Just for my information, could he revisit that section of his remarks to give us some idea of the roles of ministers other than the Minister of the Environment in the legislation?

[Translation]

**Mr. Yvon Charbonneau:** Mr. Speaker, it concerns instances in the bill where decision making power will not rest with the Minister of the Environment and the Minister of Health, the two sponsors of the bill, but will be transferred to cabinet, which will have to assess a number of complex situations.

For example, when the time comes to reach agreements on the export of substances or dangerous waste with other countries, cabinet will have the final say. It is also true that there are issues relating to air pollution, internationally, when there are sources of pollution on both sides of the border. There are also issues involving international water pollution, binational water pollution in our case, by Canada and the United States. Here again cabinet will have to decide on the scope of agreements and of the measures to be taken.

The same is true in the area of aquaculture. If the government feels that other laws protect the environment sufficiently, the Minister of the Environment, at that point, does not have to intervene. This applies as well to biotechnology.

There are certain complex issues causing responsibility for environmental management by the government to be shared among a number of ministers. I know that some see this as a weakness, a potential source of conflict, misunderstanding, delay and blockage. This should be examined. I mentioned it in the series of questions I raised.

At the same time, if management of the environment is to take place within the perspective of sustainable development, all ministers dealing with these economic or international matters must themselves assume responsibility, which involves their staff and their department, for including environmental concerns in their decisions.

It would not then be just the Minister of the Environment or the Minister of Health, who would alone bear responsibility for the environment. Little by little, it would become a concern of cabinet as a whole. I gave this example as an illustration, I believe that this puts us on the road to sustainable development over the years. It will not be easy, but it is definitely the right road.

[English]

**Mr. Rick Laliberte (Churchill River, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I commend the hon. member on taking an active role through the



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whole review process. He was there and saw the evolution of the past year in what we have before us today at third reading. He made the bold statement that we do not have a perfect bill. Unfortunately that is what this process has created. He also highlighted the fact that the bill was an improvement to the existing CEPA bill.

Just before we departed on the journey of reviewing Bill C-32, the standing committee indicated that enforcement of existing CEPA laws was very much in question, that the enforcement of existing laws lacked financial and human resources.

Would the hon. member comment on the enforcement of the bill which includes additional responsibilities and additional duties? Does he see the need for a major improvement to be made in terms of additional resources required for the enforcement of this law?

• (1230)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Yvon Charbonneau:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my NDP colleague for asking how the legislation we are passing will be enforced, a question that concerns us all.

As members of the committee, we all signed a report pointing out the weaknesses in the enforcement of certain aspects of the existing legislation.

Given the challenge of vigorous and rigorous enforcement, there are two concerns I wish to share with the hon. member. First of all, the legislation must assign powers and provide for enforcement and, in addition, the government must set aside appropriate funding in the budget for the Minister of the Environment to enforce the legislation.

The bill creates more favourable conditions by allowing enforcement officers to perform the duties of peace officers and to issue summonses, as required, when they come across unacceptable situations.

Second, there is more encouragement for ongoing public vigilance with respect to enforcement. Ultimately, this holds out the most promise. There are also additional measures to protect whistleblowers. So much for the legal angle.

That leaves the financial considerations. The last two budgets set aside increased amounts for the Minister of the Environment to assume her responsibilities with respect to the analysis of toxic substances.

[*English*]

**Hon. Charles Caccia (Davenport, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to speak and to ask a few questions about several areas that I find rather puzzling in relation to this bill.

The first one that comes to mind has to do with investing millions of dollars in toxic research when the legislative vehicle provided by parliament sputters on three cylinders, panting along in a veritable obstacle race.

The official opposition offers an interesting benchmark for analysing the bill. Why would the official opposition support the bill? Why is it that a regional party like the Reform, with no base in Ontario, Quebec and eastern Canada, would support the bill? Is the Reform Party likely to support a bill strong on pollution prevention, strong on the elimination of toxic substances and strong on the definition of inherent toxicity?

These are questions for those who do not know the complex and technical bill that is passing through the Chamber right now. It is to them that these questions are directed. The political decision of Reform today to support the bill gives a clue to the real value of the bill as amended last night. The Reform position, I submit, was written by industry, the very industry the bill is supposed to control through pollution prevention.

Some people claim that Bill C-32 will put Canada on the leading edge of environmental protection law worldwide. This claim and other claims need to be examined closely.

There is much celebration of the fact that Bill C-32 places strict deadlines on the government to act to protect the environment and human health from toxic substances, namely three and a half years after a substance is determined to be toxic. Such determination alone may take many years and because of certain amendments adopted last night is likely to take longer. Even when action is taken it may be in the form of voluntary codes or other soft actions.

We should not be trumpeting that the strict deadlines will result in strict controls or bans. As for virtual elimination the claim that Canada is the first country to take the action of virtual elimination should also be considered very carefully.

In committee we tried to make it as strong as possible, but following last night's report stage amendments the definition is a far cry from the original intention of the committee.

• (1235)

Following the intervention of industry there is no guarantee under the bill that virtual elimination would achieve zero or near zero emissions. There is no requirement to push toward that desired result.

What comfort is it to Canadians if toxic chemicals get catalogued and assessed but not necessarily eliminated? All Bill C-32 can do for Canadians is reduce, perhaps one day, the release of toxic substances to a certain level but not necessarily to zero.

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Another claim to be examined is that nine of the dirty dozen toxic substances so far slated for virtual elimination have been dealt with. When Canadians hear this claim, they would expect that these substances have been banned or at least their use severely limited by regulation.

People hearing this claim in the context of CEPA might also expect that the substances have been dealt with under CEPA, especially since CEPA is often called Canada's cornerstone legislation for environmental protection. In fact, the use of some of these substances has been voluntarily discontinued by the manufacturer. In other cases the substance is regulated not under CEPA but under the Pest Control Products Act.

Bill C-32 could have been a reasonably good law. Yet it is still a far cry from the red book promise on page 66 of the 1993 document which reads:

Canada needs a new approach that focuses on preventing pollution at source. Timetables must be set for phasing out all use of the most persistent toxic substances.

This is a far cry from the commitment in 1993. As I said, the bill could be a reasonably good one if the improvements made in committee had not been dismantled at the report stage; if business interests had not been put ahead of public health; if the official opposition had performed an effective role, which it did not; and if at the last minute, after the committee had reported to the House, cabinet ministers had not circumvented the good work of the committee by introducing last minute changes not examined in committee as in the case of nutrients and had not eliminated strong provisions thoroughly endorsed by the standing committee as in the case of inherent toxicity.

In the end what prevailed is the agenda of industry and of the Reform Party which is clearly in the pocket of industry. One just needs to look at its amendments or read its speeches at report stage and today to see the Reform's determination to ingratiate itself to industry with the next election in mind.

Considering the Reform performance on Bill C-32 and its strict adherence to the pressure of corporate lobbyists, an interesting question arises on whether our electoral law should continue to allow corporate donations to political parties.

It is interesting to note the member for Nanaimo—Alberni said in his speech yesterday that Canadians should be concerned about managing toxic substances, not preventing their use. What a great commitment to the status quo. The member's pronouncement reflects letters from industry lobby groups to MPs a few weeks ago, which we all received and must have noted.

To conclude, let me say that we missed many opportunities to have a strong bill. We had strong articulation of the precautionary principle. It was defeated. We offered a strong vehicle for the Minister of the Environment to prevent pollution in the growing

agriculture industry. It was defeated. We strived for a strong fast track for dealing with inherently toxic substances. It was rejected.

We proposed strong provisions allowing the Minister of the Environment to protect the environment and human health arising from the expanding biotechnology sector. That opportunity was lost. We proposed an assurance that federal ministers of the environment and health could act quickly, where necessary, unimpeded by federal-provincial political considerations. It was defeated.

We proposed an assurance that the ministers could act quickly, where necessary, unimpeded by economic scare-mongering by industry lobbies and the Reform Party, unimpeded by members of cabinet with economic and not environmental mandates. That was also defeated.

• (1240)

As a result we have this bill at third reading. It could have been a reasonably good law. It could have been a strong piece of legislation for the next 10 years. It could have put health ahead of industrial interest. It could have put the public interest ahead of investment.

The most regrettable part of this entire debate is that somehow we conceptually fell into the trap of believing that we could not have strong environmental legislation at the same time as a healthy economy. We were somehow distracted by the belief initiated and well promoted by lobby groups that we could have only one or the other.

That is the major drawback which has somehow been in the way of the committee's work and in the way of parliament achieving the kind of legislation of which we could be proud for the next decade in relation to the prevention of pollution as written in the title of the bill and in relation to the protection of human health.

**Mr. Howard Hilstrom (Selkirk—Interlake, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the position of the member for Davenport on the bill is obviously not being substantiated by many people in the House and across the country. He is taking a minority position. In his arguments he is bringing forward to us the idea that it is the Reform Party's problem and the Reform Party's bill.

Does he agree the bill was put forward by the Liberal government and is being passed by a majority vote in the Liberal Party?

I have a second question which gets down to the technicalities of the bill and concerns discussions about scientifically based decision making. We have to be clear that international trade and issues dealing with pesticides are based on science only. The Europeans are denying beef access into Europe on a non-scientific basis. Health Canada has denied rBST on a non-scientific basis.

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Would the member comment on whose bill it is and clarify that it is in fact a government bill? It takes government members to make sure there is a majority to get it through.

Would he also clarify that the bill is purely based on scientific decision making with regard to toxic substances? The bill provides for a national ban on substances banned in other provinces or industrialized countries. This abandons risk assessment as the basis for prioritization and chemical control when it is the standard accepted internationally.

Does the bill not undermine the necessity of requiring science based decision making?

**Hon. Charles Caccia:** Mr. Speaker, the member for Selkirk—Interlake is asking two questions, each of which would require a considerable amount of time to answer. I will try to start with the second one by saying that science is clearly ultimate in its conclusions and gives to humans on the planet the ultimate answer, the conclusive answer upon which we connect the laws of gravity, for instance.

There is a realm of science that covers a field in which there is no absolute certainty, for example the case of heavy metals where science cannot give us the ultimate answer. This is why the precautionary principle was invented some time ago.

• (1245 )

We have learned over time particularly when it comes to toxic substances that have the potential capacity to damage human health and the ecosystem, that it is preferable to act when science is not completely conclusive on the assumption that it is better to act earlier rather than wait to see the smoking gun. This is as well as I can answer the hon. member's question.

As to the other question which is a very legitimate one which I welcome, of course we know who proposed the bill. We also know the role of the official opposition. It opposes almost everything in the House and votes against almost every bill that comes through the House.

This bill is so important in relation to the corporate and the industrial world. Why is it that the official opposition finds it possible to support this bill in contrast to its traditional attitude and role of opposing it, which is part of the way parliament is designed? Why did members of the official opposition propose amendments at report stage which were virtually word for word the same amendments proposed by the government? Why is there this desire and readiness on the part of the official opposition not to oppose this measure but to support it?

I think this is a very legitimate question. I hope the hon. member will reflect upon why his party and the Conservative Party have decided to support this measure the way that it is now, having

dismantled the work of the committee at the report stage under pressure by industry and lobbyists here in Ottawa.

**Mr. Gerry Ritz (Battlefords—Lloydminster, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Surrey Central.

I am pleased to have this opportunity to speak to Bill C-32, an act regarding pollution prevention, protection of the environment and human health in order to contribute to sustainable development in Canada.

Though other concerns have replaced the environment at the top of Canadians' list of issues, I am sure we will all agree that the environment will always be a serious matter across the political spectrum both federally and provincially. Canadians who are unfortunately the most prolific users of water can be called upon to do the right thing to clean up and protect that resource. They look to governments to provide leadership in that area.

Like recycling and conservation efforts in solid waste management, Canadians have shown themselves to be responsible, concerned and enthusiastic. However, I do not think they have much respect for big buck, one size fits all, government imposed solutions that feature the federal government competing against and overriding provincial and local initiatives.

My colleagues in the Reform Party have dispelled the notion that our party does not care about the environment and have made it very clear that successful programs to clean up the environment and keep it that way have to use a balanced approach.

As on so many issues that have a direct impact on the citizens of the country, the idea that one party or philosophy is against and their opposite numbers are for a certain item is simplistic and outdated. There is nobody here in the House or in the country who is for dirty water or dirty air, or somehow in favour of the chemicals in our food and in our soil.

In my corner of the country we struggle daily to grow the best quality food to feed Canadians and the world. We are more than aware that water is a precious resource. We are also aware that many government initiatives meant to clean up or control problems simply end up making things worse or creating new ones. That is why we look at these massive bills and all their amendments very carefully. Quite often it is more important to put the right system in place than to have no system at all.

The title of this bill suggests that all the elements are here to address this issue properly. But titles, like book covers, do not always tell what is inside.

This act is meant to address prevention of pollution and that is a noble effort by all measures. It would make our job so much easier if we had been successful in regulating chemical use in the past. We want to protect the environment and human health which cannot be

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more important. Then we see a reference to sustainable development which has become a bit of a political football between industry and environmental lobbyists.

To have successful legislation, we believe that all these elements must be included and that they must be addressed in a balanced manner. One way to do this is to ensure that what regulators and industry have at their disposal is good science.

• (1250)

We have seen with the health protection branch that when big money interests combine with butt-covering bureaucracy the result is often the political use of science on a selective basis and the undermining of credibility for the whole process. When we are dealing with chemicals used for industrial and agricultural purposes, we have the potential for the same thing.

With billions of dollars at stake, it is vital that players on both sides and the consumers who have to live with the consequences are confident that the process of identifying, regulating and approving substances be open and accountable. As with the tax system, when producers and consumers lose confidence they resort to avoidance and to reactions that might make problems worse rather than better.

It is no better when we have a powerful lobby on one side or the other. The perception that big industry has government in its pocket is contradicted when environmentalists step up to the plate.

I remember a few years ago when there was a panic in the U.S. about the chemical alar. This was sprayed on apples and other orchard fruit to keep them on the branch longer. I am sure the developers of the chemical felt they had a good thing. The fruit would be better developed and more nutritious the longer it grew on the tree.

Nobody sets out to invent a chemical to cause human cancer but before long there were scientific tests that suggested that is what that chemical did. Very quickly there was a panic. Millions of mothers stopped buying apples and a year's crop had to be destroyed at a loss of billions of dollars to the producers. Farmers in the American northwest were devastated and it took years to get their customers back.

What was the so-called scientific basis for this panic? Like saccharin just a few years earlier, doses of alar so high that a child would virtually have to eat the stuff by the plateful were fed to rats until they developed tumours.

Because of a clause inserted in the Environmental Protection Act in the 1950s, any chemical that even hinted that it had anything to do with an illness of any sort had to be banned. It did not matter

that the chemical had to be ingested by the truckload, it was just enough that one rat in a hundred seemed to get sick as a result. Saccharin by the way is back on the market, although it will never catch up to some of the other products after its fiasco.

Somebody might say "If it was your kid being saved, you might think it was worthwhile to ban certain chemicals before they got going". Maybe, if anybody could ever pin down exactly what the relationship was between any one chemical and any given illness or combination of those.

We know that there are tens of thousands of chemicals in the environment. This fact is one reason for updating CEPA through Bill C-32. We should also be aware though that there are millions of natural chemicals everywhere we look. Just because they are from nature does not make them benign.

Tobacco for instance does not contain nicotine for human enjoyment. It is in fact a pesticide produced by the plant itself to ward off certain organisms. Try as we might to tell people of the terrible damage that this chemical and the hundreds of others found in tobacco smoke can do to their health, millions still light up daily. From that billions of dollars go to governments and multinational companies which shows what we are really up against here.

Would it be balanced to simply take the so-called right to smoke away from people? There are plenty of non-smokers who might like to go that route. But prohibition usually leads to increased use rather than the intended results, and governments would be forced to pay for an anti-smoking campaign at the same time as they were missing out on all those excise revenues they have come to enjoy. I am not suggesting that tobacco is a good example for Bill C-32; it is just an example of the jumble of health and economic issues that comes with most human activities.

When we consider what to do about thousands of chemicals, we cannot assume that blanket prohibition based on an agenda driven science and backed by the arbitrary powers of ministerial orders in council will be the answer to environmental problems. We need only look at the recent MMT fiasco to see where this leads.

The auto industry did not want MMT. Some lobby groups did not want MMT. But the producer of that chemical claimed to have extensive evidence that MMT was not the bogeyman it was made out to be. Millions of tax dollars later, the member for Hamilton East has another blunder on her record and the public is no closer to knowing whether or not there is anything wrong with this gasoline additive.

I am sure there are other gas additives out there that deserve closer scrutiny as well. There are environmentalists who would approve of banning the use of gasoline altogether. But unless we line up industry, consumers, scientists and regulators into a co-operative open system of examining chemicals and the processes that they are used in, the system will not work. It will break down.

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We may think it is good enough to put arbitrary powers in the hands of a minister, but ministers can be influenced by powerful friends. We may think it is enough to hire scientists to do studies, but we have to be clear about what we are asking our scientists to look for and who is funding those results. We may think it is good enough to shut down agriculture or industry because a few are not being responsible, but the suffering throughout the economy would be enormous.

After Bill C-32 we still have disagreements about who is responsible for what. Industry hates uncertainty, and yes, that is important. Empirical studies indicate economic prosperity leads to a cleaner environment. When there is a profit to invest in better processes, there is less pollution, less waste.

• (1255)

Governments with successful economies can devote more money to infrastructure, like new water treatment plants and water transmission systems that do not leak water at the rates we see in many jurisdictions.

Agriculture and industry need profits to research and develop new products and technologies that will be more efficient. Anyone who thinks profit is a dirty word should think twice about what they are asking Canadian businesses to do or do without. We all want to clean up the environment and we should all have input into how that is done.

My party and I will be voting in favour of Bill C-32 with some caution. The version of the bill that went to committee we feel was on the right track. We want to see an environmental regime that reflects a multiparty approach to environmental issues. Ask all the stakeholders.

We can leave a cleaner country to our grandchildren than the one we inherited but we cannot ignore other responsibilities as well. We have to leave a record of responsible research, a model of intergovernmental co-operation, an economy that provides the greatest good for the greatest number and a tradition of open participation and involvement of all the stakeholders.

**Mr. Peter Adams (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I listened with considerable interest to what the member had to say. I may not have heard correctly but it seemed to me that he suggested that the auto industry was opposed to the banning of MMT.

My recollection is that it was quite the reverse. The auto industry was very concerned not only about the environmental effects of MMT but also about the effects of MMT on the diagnostic equipment which is now a part of every modern automobile. That is the equipment which monitors the emissions to the atmosphere of everything that the car produces. If in fact MMT is damaging those

diagnostic parts of the vehicle, a vehicle could in fact be polluting tremendously without the owner knowing it.

Perhaps I misheard but it seemed to me the member suggested that the automobile industry did not want to ban MMT.

**Mr. Gerry Ritz:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his clarification. I did say the auto industry was against MMT, not for it, because of the diagnostic problems that would result.

**Mr. Rick Laliberte (Churchill River, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, this morning it was a nice revelation to hear that the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment said she knew the difference between not environmentally friendly amendments and environmentally friendly amendments.

Does the hon. member know the difference between environmentally friendly amendments to this bill and not environmentally friendly amendments? How many environmentally friendly amendments were proposed by his party? They certainly did not succeed in supporting the amendments that we hoped would have strengthened the bill. On the issue of phase-out that was deleted last night in the amendments, is the hon. member aware that the most toxic substances in the country should have been a priority in the bill and the amendments were deleted by the way his party voted last night?

**Mr. Gerry Ritz:** Mr. Speaker, it was said earlier, I believe by the member for Churchill River, that this bill is not perfect and we certainly agree with that. As I said in my speech, we will be supporting the bill with caution. We would still like to see some changes. We would like to see further things done. This is an ongoing debate and it will be an ongoing process.

The biggest thing we need to see in any legislation like this is balance. Let us look at what the stakeholders are involved with. We saw that with the economic impact Kyoto had in my part of the country and the uncertainty that it creates for industry and so on. Industry is what creates jobs.

When we talk about environmental impacts we have to look at the economic environment and the impact on that as well. There has to be balance in everything we do. Right now a lot of the chemical companies and so on are almost in limbo waiting to see what is going to happen with this legislation. Certainly they lobbied hard to keep the status quo in some cases.

There are some cases where things need to be changed and others where we need to take a more moderate phase-in approach as the member has said.

All of the actions in the reports must be based on scientific reports, not politics. That is the basis where we are coming from. It has to be a balanced approach.

*Government Orders*

• (1300)

**Ms. Paddy Torsney (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of the Environment, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the member opposite has raised the issue of MMT. I would hope he would recognize that action taken previously on MMT was not under CEPA.

Science will demonstrate the risks. Environment Canada is doing research on MMT at the University of Montreal with Professor Zayed. We have the power to regulate fuels within this bill, I believe it is in section 140. With the good CEPA that is being proposed today, we can do more on the fuels area. The Canadian Vehicle Manufacturers Association supported the changes that were being made in this area so we could do more. Does the member opposite recognize this fact?

**Mr. Gerry Ritz:** Mr. Speaker, again we would have to go back to having anything to do with products like MMT based on scientific fact, not on public uproar fueled by all the stakeholders. It has to be a balanced approach. The idea that it can be regulated through CEPA is good. It gives us an avenue we can work through.

As I have indicated, there is a lot we can support in this bill but let us proceed with caution and revisit this as often as we need to in order to make it a better piece of legislation over the years.

**Mr. Gurmant Grewal (Surrey Central, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of the people of Surrey Central to speak to Bill C-32, the government's review of the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, CEPA in short. Before I go any further I would like to congratulate my hon. colleague from Battlefords—Lloydminster on the excellent speech he delivered in the House today.

Section 139 of the act requires a five year mandatory review of the administration of the act. The review we are debating today began in the last parliament.

The main purpose of Bill C-32 is to protect the environment and human health. This legislation provides measures for the protection of the environment and human health, pollution prevention, management of toxic substances, virtual elimination of the release of the most dangerous substances and partnerships to achieve the highest level of environmental quality.

CEPA replaces and incorporates several previously existing acts such as the Environmental Contaminants Acts, the Ocean Dumping Control Act, the Clean Air Act and many others.

Bill C-32 regulates the use of toxic chemicals by industry. It controls the importation, sale and disposal of dangerous chemicals including PCBs, dioxins and ozone depleting substances.

The act was intended to fill regulatory gaps in certain environmental matters, for example toxic substances. The act was also

aimed at enabling Canada to fulfill international obligations. Bill C-32 is very complex and deals with aspects of pollution prevention.

The Reform Party supports realistic measures that protect the environment and balance environmental concerns with economic concerns. Reform believes that environmental considerations must carry equal weight with economic, social and technical considerations in the development of a project. This is key to protecting our environment.

Reform believes in public consultation, public participation and public commitment. Governments must work together to ensure our environment is a priority.

When Bill C-32 was introduced in the House of Commons we were pleased to note many changes had been made to improve the legislation compared to the bill that died on the Order Paper in the last parliament. The previous bill reviewing CEPA was the Liberal government's attempt to do a five year review of CEPA and it failed.

For over nine months the government's second attempt to review CEPA was under review by the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development. Over 400 amendments were tabled in committee. Reform fought hard to maintain the original intent of the bill. Over 100 amendments were passed which changed the bill significantly.

Canadians need the tools for environmental protection. Amendments to this bill threaten to handicap Canadians with unrealistic and unworkable regulations.

• (1305)

What are the key problems with the committee's amendments to Bill C-32? This is the big question. There are three main areas of concern. One is ministerial power. The Liberals want to give the minister too much autocratic power. The second is science based decision making. The Liberals are allowing politics to interfere with environmental decision making. That is wrong. The third is a cost effective approach. The Liberals have not been consistent in maintaining a cost effective approach to protecting our environment. In fact, I do not think the concept of a cost effective approach exists on the benches on the other side.

There are 11 other areas of concern which follow after the committee amendments. I will name only a few. Among them are: pollution prevention planning; limitless power of ministers to interfere with exports; export of hazardous waste; environment emergency planning; and the precautionary principle. All references to cost effectiveness in the bill have been removed. On the use of the word toxics the bill needs to focus on the management rather than the use of toxic substances. On residual powers, there are many areas of interdepartmental overlap and duplication.

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The Reform Party put forward amendments to address all those areas of concern. Canadians will support legislation that is practical and effective. Canadians need the framework to provide for stability and economic feasibility. Legislation must enhance our ability to improve environmental performance. Canadians must be able to implement sustainable development and remain competitive and profitable.

Our approach to the environment must be balanced. We need a strong healthy economy in order to take concrete action to protect our environment.

The Reform Party supports sustainable development which is human activity that combines economic, social and environmental considerations without compromising the well-being of existing and future generations. We support the rationalization of federal and provincial laws and the development of regional and/or national environmental standards where appropriate. We support the integration of social, environmental and economic objectives into Canada's environmental management, philosophy, structure, procedures and planning.

We feel that strong federal leadership is needed for a commitment to sustainable development. This includes creating partnerships with provincial governments, private industry, educational institutions and the public in order to promote meaningful progress in the area of environmental protection.

With respect to Bill C-32 we support the principle of establishing and regularly reviewing standards that are based on sound science and which are technologically, socially and economically viable.

**Mr. Charlie Penson (Peace River, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his comments on the bill. I noticed my colleague talked about the need for sustainable development and how we in the Reform Party are very supportive of that.

**An hon. member:** That is a new twist.

**Mr. Charlie Penson:** We hear quite a bit of chatter coming from the NDP, Mr. Speaker, but I am sure they will get up and make their comments in due course on their own.

At the hearings we had for the trade committee in Winnipeg the International Institute for Sustainable Development talked about some destructive policies that occur especially by the use of subsidies. They said that can hurt our environment and hurt the drive for sustainable development.

They pointed to agricultural practices such as in the Netherlands and even in Canada where subsidies have had the negative effect of hurting the amount of topsoil in the last 100 years. Half of our topsoil has been depleted as a result of practices largely encouraged by subsidies.

• (1310)

They talked about practices in the Amazon, in Holland and in Denmark in terms of how many nitrates go into the ground water as a result of the heavy subsidies that take place. The heavy use of nitrogen especially in agriculture practices because of the subsidies that are used to produce food in those countries is very destructive to our environment.

Does my colleague have any thoughts on how destructive these practices are and the need to get rid of subsidies and get back to a market economy rather than the use of subsidies as a way of dealing with things to help clean up our environment?

**Mr. Gurmant Grewal:** Mr. Speaker, I highly appreciate the thoughtful question by the hon. member for Peace River. He is innovative in his thinking and I always appreciate it when he asks intelligent questions.

Sustainable development is a very important concept. Whether it is in foreign aid, even in CIDA where we spend lots of money, we forget about the sustainable development part of it or the benefits we are able to retrieve. Similarly on environment issues when subsidies are given to certain companies they lavishly spend them on fertilizers and so on.

My first degree is in agriculture. That is my background. I understand the excessive use of these chemicals and how they imbalance the properties of the soil and their adverse environmental effects. I certainly agree with the hon. member for Peace River that this is a bad concept.

As I mentioned, sustainable development is a human activity that combines economic, social and environmental considerations without compromising the development of existing and future generations. It is definitely our moral responsibility to take care of those things and hand over our environment and the planet to the next generation in the form that we got them. That is our moral obligation.

When we see all kinds of pollution taking place and all kinds of chemicals being leached into the water, into our streams and soil, and the air being polluted, it is a very important concept that we focus on sustainable development. Whether it is subsidies or other factors, they should be well taken care of.

**Mr. Steve Mahoney (Mississauga West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we seem to be having a bit of a love-in today with members climbing on board the environmental wagon. That is a good thing. Obviously the environment should transcend partisan lines and political differences so that we can pass legislation like Bill C-32 that will put some teeth into the areas of enforcement in dealing with toxic substances by giving the minister and the ministry the powers that are needed.

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I find it somewhat interesting though to hear members opposite criticize the bill from the point of view that it gives too much power to the minister or the ministry officials. In question period they would be on their feet waxing somewhat indignantly demanding action and that someone do something. There is a little bit of a contradiction there. However in the spirit that this debate seems to be exuding, I will try to stay away from those aspects.

This bill is about a number of things. It is about toxic substances, the testing, recognition and control of them, the planning on how to eliminate them and the damage they do to human health and to our ecology. It is about air quality and water quality, things that are extremely important to all of us in our ridings and in our large urban communities. It is about enforcing and policing, which I think is long overdue, giving the appropriate authorities the tools they need to deal with people who violate.

I can tell stories about years gone by in Mississauga when certain chemical companies and others, and in fairness to them it was many years ago, were releasing some of their substances into the storm sewers. This was back in the days when I was on city council. Downstream we had situations where people were panicking because there was foam bubbling up through the grates of the storm sewers. Kids were playing outside. No one knew what it was; they were trying to figure it out. Through the region of Peel we ultimately traced it back to the general area. Even though in that particular case we were unable pinpoint the violator, we called a meeting of all industrial companies in the area to show them the damage.

• (1315)

To be fair, I do not know if it was intentional, inadvertent or otherwise, but someone poured some substances into the storm sewer. This can have a devastating impact downstream on all the creeks and streams in my community which ultimately lead into Lake Ontario, from which we draw our drinking water. I should hasten to add that we put it through a cleansing system. We do not drink it straight out of the lake.

This kind of situation is extremely important. It is important that we have a bill which gives the minister the authority to order some kind of planning by potential industrial polluters that could damage our water quality.

Air quality is another issue I find quite interesting. The solution to dealing with waste in our communities over the years in some instances has been to truck it out of the GTA into the Detroit market and put it in an incinerator, at which point it is burned and the prevailing winds bring it all back into Canada. I am not sure that is a particularly intelligent way of dealing with waste disposal. It is surely not an intelligent way of dealing with air quality.

I want to talk about pollution prevention and sustainable development, but before doing so I acknowledge the work by many

members on both sides of the House. I particularly want to say that we are all busy doing various things.

My role as an MP over the past several months has been to chair a task force on youth entrepreneurship. I have been travelling all over the country. I also work on citizenship and immigration issues. I have not had time to attend the environmental committee hearings, but I have read them, followed them, talked with my colleagues, and listened to presentations at caucus.

As all of us are busy doing different things in our parliamentary lives, we rely on members who carry the torch and candle for any particular issue. I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge the tremendous work of the parliamentary secretary, the member for Burlington, in the leadership that she has shown in shepherding the bill through committee, through report stage and on to third reading.

I acknowledge the member for Davenport, a former environment minister and a man respected across the country for his dedication to environmental issues and his hard work. The member for Lac-Saint-Louis who is sharing my time has shown great perseverance. For some years I have known the member for North York to be totally committed to improving our environment, from dealing with toxic substances, air quality and water quality, to enforcement issues.

Of course there is the Minister of the Environment. Those of us on this side are extremely proud of the efforts she has made at a time when raising the environment to the top of the political agenda was perhaps not as politically sexy as it once was. Because of financial constraints and for all of the wrong reasons the minister had to fight hard around the cabinet table. She has worked with her members in caucus and in committee to ensure these issues were brought forward.

I also acknowledge the work of the member in our caucus who chairs the committee on sustainable development. That is the member for Anjou—Rivière-des-Prairies who has worked doggedly to bring forward and highlight these issues. I very much appreciate that.

I noticed that provisions throughout the bill acknowledge the roles of technology, technical knowledge and innovation in securing the protection of the environment and human health for Canadians today and tomorrow.

I recently had the privilege along with the minister responsible for foreign trade of attending a team Canada trip with 62 young entrepreneurs to Silicon Valley. We visited the Alameda naval base, 1,700 acres of land in the valley area outside Oakland. It is closed. On the edge of that land is a landfill site full of toxic chemicals and live ammunition. We actually had to sign a waiver before we went out there in case we stepped on something inappropriate. I wondered why we were going but in any event we survived.



*Government Orders*

• (1320)

The purpose of my story is to tell the House that there is a \$160 million clean-up contract for that landfill site. It is leaching right into the ocean. There is a \$160 million U.S. contract and there are eight companies involved in cleaning it up.

Seven of those companies are Canadian companies and the lead technology is from the University of Waterloo. We can be extremely proud that in the area of environmental sciences this country is producing the technology and the technicians to lead the way in environmental clean-up. The eighth company, the American company, is the one that hauled away the residue after the treatment had taken place. We do have some things of which we can be proud in the areas of technology and showing leadership.

I will touch on another area of the bill which I think is vitally important. We tend to think the best way to solve problems is to wrap them around tax cuts or tax rebates for people who show leadership in the area.

The bill provides the opportunity for an awards system. It is my view that Canadians want to be recognized for contributing to their communities. They want to be recognized for contributing to improving the environment. What better way than putting it into the bill? It allows an opportunity for an awards program. They can with great pride put a plaque on a wall in the office or in the study at home. They can share with their families and be recognized for their vital contributions.

That is worth far more than some kind of income tax cut for a company. It sends a message to all Canadians that we want them to buy into cleaning up the environment. Some would say that it is trite to say, but we have simply borrowed this space for our children. We can hope that we leave it in better shape.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Clifford Lincoln (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Environmental Protection Act has been in force for 11 years; it dates from 1988. Five years have already gone by since the government presented its report recommending that the legislation be reviewed.

For 11 years, therefore, we have been talking about introducing legislation that would be more progressive and more consistent with the latest advances in society. When the bill was referred to the parliamentary committee, it was deficient in every respect. It was certainly not as far-reaching or strong as the previous bill, Bill C-74, which died on the order paper when the last election was called.

After all the work done by the committee, the hundreds and hundreds of hours spent by colleagues from all parties, I think that

we transformed a very imperfect bill into one that was certainly improved, that represented a reasonable compromise among members of all parties.

[*English*]

Then sadly big business went to work. When the bill came out of committee and reached the House at report stage, the formidable industrial lobby was in place. Eleven large big business associations started to write letters to all parliamentarians which filtered through the offices of the establishment and started to level the usual threats at all parliamentarians. I understand some members were reminded of the marvellous political donations these big industrial giants gave.

• (1325)

Among the usual threats was the threat of closure. That is almost invariable. The aluminium industry said that if the bill were not changed, it would physically close its aluminium plants and take them somewhere else.

Another industrial group of associations said that if the bill went through the way it was, all the wood burning stoves and waste incinerators in the fishing villages of Newfoundland would have to be closed.

Of course we listened. Sadly we always do. We always worry about the formidable threats of the industrial lobby. We are scared that it will move its plants and stop investments. It always seems to work.

In some very key areas industry wanted diluted, we diluted them. The precautionary principle, a key part of the bill, was diluted. Inherent toxicity, another key element of the bill, was diluted. Virtual elimination, which to start with was not very strong because it did not go as far as the 1993 red book commitment of phasing out the use of all toxic chemicals at source, only refers to releases. Even then industry cried foul and it was diluted.

The minister's prerogatives in certain areas where our jurisdiction is very clear, such as international air and international water, was diluted in favour of the minister having to go to cabinet to justify reports.

I am saddened that in certain cases such as inherent toxicity the question never came up at committee. We were happy with what was finally arrived at and suddenly there was a change.

With regard to virtual elimination, the irony is that the definition accepted by the committee was the government's definition. The government felt that the original wording in the act when it came before the committee was very confusing. This is what we all felt. With the help of people as highly placed as the deputy minister, it was rewritten and re-presented by the government in an amended form. We did not think it was perfect but we agreed. Then big

*Government Orders*

business said it went too far and the government diluted its own amendment.

We finally found out that a little clause crept in somehow which had to do with review of the act. In the original bill it was supposed to be in place for seven years before being reviewed. We amended it to five years, as it presently is, but now we find out that the review might be carried out by either a House of Commons committee, a committee of the Senate or a joint committee. Before it had to be a House committee, but a little amendment was included to say that it could be here or there.

What irony that a bill of the House of Commons, which has taken 11 years to create, would perhaps not be reviewed by us. If the government does not like all the environmental cracks in committee then it would send it to the Senate to be looked after.

This morning the cat came out of the bag. My colleague refers to a love-in between Reform and the government today. I am sorry to say it is like a blind date. The introducer of the two lovers is big industry. They have found a way to get together and agree on all the various amendments industry supported.

● (1330)

The member for Nanaimo—Alberni made the admission, and I agree with him, that all the work was to bring back the bill to what it was when it arrived at committee. He said that the committee must be balanced. What we did was to bring back the bill to the point where it was before it went to committee, which means, in logical fashion, that the committee means nothing at all.

Some will say, as do Reform members, that there must be a balance between the economy and the environment. Investment and business cannot suffer, as if they do when they are environmentally friendly. All facts point exactly to the reverse. I pointed out the other day that all of the firms which have been environmentally friendly have increased their profits, their investments, their presence and their labour force.

The 3M company, since 1995 when it instituted Pollution Prevention Pays, has saved \$800 million U.S. and tonnes and tonnes of pollution, as well as United Technologies, Baum in Germany, firms in Sweden and elsewhere.

The debate today is really about two points of view within a system: the short term and the seven generations, the coin value and the common weal value, the public good. In this balance human health must have priority. It must always come first. That is the side I happen to be on.

I would love to have been able today to stand to say that I back this bill 100%. I am a member of the government. The reason I am here as part of the Liberal Party is because I believe strongly in its

fundamental values. However, I cannot live with the dilutions the government has brought forth on virtual elimination, on the precautionary principle, on inherent toxicity, on the minister's powers, and then the little sneaky amendment about the Senate committee. I cannot live with those things.

I want to be at peace with myself, regardless of how much I suffer when I stand differently from my colleagues. I would like to stand with them. Sadly, I cannot support this bill.

I saw this morning a parade of Reform members saying how much they back this bill. I remember the debate on climate change when they, almost like members of the flat earth society, said that the scientists who were saying that climate change was a big problem were wrong. When I see them today endorsing this bill I say to myself that I must be on the right side. I might be one of a tiny, tiny minority, but I believe in what I believe. I think this bill is flawed and I will not support it.

**Mr. Werner Schmidt (Kelowna, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate what the hon. member opposite said this afternoon. I think it is commendable that he used the word balance. I would like to ask the hon. member, what exactly does balance mean? I would suggest to him that perhaps it is not an either/or proposition.

It seems to me that to be environmentally friendly is a good plan. It is economically sound. It is of social benefit. It is not an either/or proposition. It is almost as if all industry has to be some kind of an enemy to the environment. That is not true. I do not believe that and neither does he, I am sure.

I would like him to clarify exactly what he believes the word balance means. What kind of balance would he propose for industry and environmentalists?

**Mr. Clifford Lincoln:** Mr. Speaker, this whole debate about balance is a red herring. There is no such thing. What I believe in is total integration, the holistic integration of all issues.

The environment and the economy are certainly not enemies or adversaries. I never said that. On the contrary, I pointed out that every business which has been environmentally friendly finds itself being a better business. It makes more money and it is a better corporate citizen.

However, laws are not made for the people who observe them. If we all observed the laws the same way, we would not need laws about red lights. We would not need laws about stopping at stop signs. If everybody observed the speeding laws, there would not be cops to catch us. We have to have laws for those who pollute. It is a minority that pollutes and the laws are directed to that minority, not to the environmentally friendly corporations. It is to the minority that these laws are geared.

*Government Orders*

• (1335)

**Mr. Rick Casson (Lethbridge, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to pose a question to the hon. member for Lac-Saint-Louis. We keep hearing about a lobby that was put forward by industry, but is it not true that members of the committee received letters from all sides on this issue and not just the one? In fact, people passed along their views from all areas of society. I know that I received those comments. I would like the hon. member to comment on that.

**Mr. Clifford Lincoln:** Mr. Speaker, of course we received letters from all sides, but the interesting point is that the amendments reflected here on the key issues are not on the side in which I believe. The side of big business was adopted almost word for word. All of these letters threatened us. They told us they were going to close the plants. They told us they were going to shut down the wood-burning stoves and make us afraid. They even sent threats saying that they give political donations and that we should remember that.

There it is. The amendments that came in now, which I am fighting against, were not the amendments we received and to which I would subscribe. They were the amendments that big business wanted. They must be jumping for joy today. That is the sad part of it.

**Hon. Charles Caccia (Davenport, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in thanking the hon. member for his thoughtful analysis, I would ask him if he could once again elaborate on this issue of balance which seems to cause a conceptual problem to members of the Reform Party who have raised this issue all morning and who do not seem to understand what really is the role of the environment in relation to the economy.

**Mr. Clifford Lincoln:** Mr. Speaker, the whole issue has to be the total integration of the environment and the economy. It goes back a long way, to the Brundtland report of 1987 and before.

Our aboriginal brothers and sisters have understood this for 10,000 years. They talk about the concept of seven generations, that Mother Earth is one and that everything is connected to everything else.

This business of saying that we have to have balance so that nobody loses is completely passé. It has no place in society. What we want is a holistic society of values, where all of these things are interlinked.

If corporate business conducts itself in the manner of being a good neighbour to the next door plant, the next door individual, the next door stream or the next door lake, there is nothing to worry about. There is no need for balance then. They will be happier. They will make more money. They will be better corporate

citizens. They will not have people such as the hon. member for Davenport or myself on their backs.

What we are against is those who breach environmental laws and pollute the atmosphere. That is why we have toxic dumps like the Sydney tar ponds and the arsenic leaching out of Giant Mines. These are the people whom we are addressing in this legislation.

My balance, in those cases, is very much in favour of the environment and human health every time. That is why I would support a much stronger bill today.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Laval East.

I am pleased to speak to Bill C-32 at third reading. I was also pleased to hear the speech by Quebec's former environment minister, the member for Lac-Saint-Louis, in which he took an in-depth look at the environmental question.

The problem the Bloc Québécois has is much more one of jurisdiction. We do not agree with the double net theory. I now turn the floor over to my colleague.

• (1340)

**Mrs. Maud Debien (Laval East, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, we are continuing the debate at third reading of the Bill C-32, an act respecting pollution prevention and the protection of the environment and human health in order to contribute to sustainable development.

With praiseworthy and environmental objectives, this new legislation represents, once again, a centralizing focus in which pollution prevention becomes nominally a national objective, that is pan-Canadian.

However, we all know that the environment is a shared jurisdiction. Jurisdiction over the environment is no doubt the broadest and most encompassing and covers vegetation, animals and humans. It includes the great planetary phenomena and the smallest micro-ecosystems.

The Constitution cannot give the federal government alone total jurisdiction over natural resources, energy, agriculture, waste management, international treaties, fish stock management, air and water quality, animal protection, land management and the list goes on.

The federal and the provincial governments therefore share responsibility according to the more specific nature of each of the issues. Nevertheless, generally speaking, as the dissenting opinion of the Bloc Québécois pointed out judiciously in response to the report of the Standing Committee on the Environment and Sustainable Development, and I quote:

### *Government Orders*

The provinces, including Quebec, have greater knowledge of the specifics of their natural environment and are in a position to arouse the interest and encourage the participation of local residents, are more open to the claims of environmental groups, are able to conclude significant agreements with national and international partners and have indicated their desire to find solutions to environmental challenges and to contribute actively to sustainable development.

The level of government closest to the reality experienced by Quebecers is certainly not that of Ottawa.

Unfortunately, the inheritors of Trudeau thought opposite, believe the contrary. Ottawa knows best. By way of illustration, let us consider what the Liberal majority did during consideration of Bill C-32 in committee.

The original version of the bill called for the federal government to act within the spirit of the intergovernmental agreements. The Liberals on the committee modified that intent by amending it with the addition of the words endeavour to, so as not to oblige or constrain the federal government to co-operate with the provinces.

Faithful to their old ways, the federal Liberals prefer to see the federal government dominate the provinces, instead of working in close collaboration with them. They would have had trouble finding a better example to demonstrate once again the Liberals' obstinate refusal to respect the provinces' jurisdiction over the environment.

This syndrome of dominant federalism lies, moreover, at the very heart of the whole piece of legislation we are debating. Starting with the preamble, the Liberals want to set out national environmental standards and codes of practice relating to ecosystems and environmental quality. The preamble states that the presence of toxic substances is of national interest.

The bill also states that environmental protection is a national goal and to that end it creates a national clearing house on pollution prevention.

As well, it gives the government the authority to establish a national fuel mark, and a national mark for motors that comply with these standards.

In short, what is better for stimulating the old Liberal reflex of reliving the past, than a statement that everything is in the national interest, in order to more easily invade areas of jurisdiction by setting national standards, while of course the National Assembly will not have a word to say in the matter.

● (1345)

In theory, Bill C-32 acknowledges the environment as a shared federal and provincial responsibility. In practice, however, it is aimed at reinforcing the preponderance of the federal government, the government of the best country in the world as far as environmental protection is concerned.

Behind its noble facade, Bill C-32 is, in reality, nothing but a reproduction of the duplications, overlaps and encroachments into areas of provincial jurisdiction. In order to justify such a waste of energy and public funds, the federal Liberals are taking refuge behind a supreme court decision, the Solicitor General of Canada v Hydro Quebec.

At issue in that case was the jurisdiction of the federal parliament over the environment. All the courts that had heard the case before the supreme court had ruled that the federal order was invalid. As a last resort, the federal government turned to the supreme court and, surprise, even the friends of the federal government issued a judgment that was not unanimous. Four of the nine judges concluded, and I quote:

Granting Parliament the authority to regulate so completely the release of substances into the environment by determining whether or not they are "toxic" would inescapably preclude the possibility of shared environmental jurisdiction and would infringe severely on other heads of power assigned to the provinces.

Unfortunately, the five other judges were more in line with the centralizing vision of the federal government. Contrary to the arguments put forth by the four judges of the supreme court, the Court of Quebec, the Superior Court and the Quebec Court of Appeal, the majority came to the conclusion that it was wholly within parliament's power to enact laws on the environment, under the Constitution Act, 1867.

This ruling violates the very principle of equality between the federal government and the provinces regarding the protection of the environment. It states on the contrary that the provinces have a role to play in this area only if it complements that of the federal government. So, the supreme court tells us that if there is a dispute between the federal and provincial governments, it is Ottawa that has the final say.

Today, the federal government is using that ruling to increase its legislative powers regarding the environment. As usual, the Liberal government is forgetting its fundamental legislation, the Constitution, which recognizes that the environment is a shared jurisdiction, in order to subordinate the role of the provinces to big brother in Ottawa.

I would like to give a concrete example of the ridiculous situations in which we will find ourselves if this bill is passed. The legislation puts the spotlight on pollution prevention and includes the power to require pollution prevention plans. This implies the development of a direct partnership between the federal government and the industrial sectors targeted.

The problem is that such partnership programs already exist between the Government of Quebec and certain industrial sectors. One example is the program to reduce industrial waste, now operating in the pulp and paper sector. Duplication? Certainly not.

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What the federal government hopes to do is force the provinces to adopt its regulations, or it will deal directly with the individuals, organizations or industries concerned. Overlap? No, no, no. In order to get what it wants, the Liberal government is barging in and upsetting the very consensus it should be trying to create in as sensitive and troubled a field as the environment.

Ultimately, this disagreement over Bill C-32 is rooted in two visions of the same reality, two ways of doing things that have nothing to do with any failure to respect the Canadian Constitution.

Short of eliminating the provinces, the Liberal government must at all costs impose an effective centralizing power in order to maintain political cohesion in the rest of Canada. The Bloc Québécois respects this vision, and the rest of Canada has already accepted it with the social union agreement, for one.

• (1350)

The Bloc Québécois feels that Quebec as a nation would be better served if it had one fully responsible government, rather than eleven with partial responsibility. Hence our notion of partnership with the rest of Canada, with respect for our different ways of seeing and doing things.

In this context, Bill C-32, with its heavy dose of paternalism and domination, would no longer have a place. Two sovereign nations would mutually agree to emphasize prevention and protection of the environment and human health in order to contribute to sustainable development.

[*English*]

**Mr. Paul Bonwick (Simcoe—Grey, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride that I rise today to address what very well could be one of the most important pieces of legislation the House deals with. I make that statement due to the fact that there is no greater issue any government could address than that of our environment.

There are few pieces of legislation that touch every facet of Canadian life and this is one. I would hope that all members of the House recognize this indisputable fact. If we recognize this, I would then suggest that the debate be centred around the support of the legislation and the responsibility that we have to Canadians. To do otherwise simply states that we are not prepared to safeguard our country nor our planet for future generations.

The buck stops here. If we cannot demonstrate the vision necessary to ensure our children are provided with a better and healthier environment, we should ask ourselves what we are doing here.

There are groups that will try to convince members, through misleading statements, accurate facts and through nothing more than fear-mongering, that the legislation is not necessary. They are wrong. They are not doing a service to the country or to future

generations by opposing such an important and critical piece of legislation.

Since 1988 the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, commonly known in the House and across the country as the CEPA, has been the cornerstone of federal environmental and health protection legislation.

One of the most critical components of the bill allows for the control of toxic substances, a topic that many members are well aware is near and dear to my heart. It will be in this area that I will concentrate my remarks.

It is in regard to Bill C-32 that they take full advantage of the advancements in environmental science, policy and law over the past decade. Concepts like sustainable development and pollution prevention have been widely accepted and needed to be incorporated in our laws. We are quite simply strengthening the CEPA in line with these concepts so that the government will be better able to protect the environment and the health of Canadians from the dangers of toxic substances.

Many toxic substances do not stay put once they are released into the environment. Toxic substances, such as mercury and PCBs for example, have been found in the blood of aboriginal peoples in communities high in the Arctic located far away from industrial development. One might ask how this could happen. Substances are transported to remote areas and pristine environments through air currents. They have long term adverse effects on the health of the people and wildlife who breathe the air, drink the water or consume the food contained therein.

Canadians are concerned about the risks that toxic substances pose to their health, to their children's health and to the long term environment of Canada.

What will Bill C-32 do to reduce or eliminate this threat? The good work that is already underway to identify and manage toxic substances will continue. The bill will introduce innovations to allow more efficient and effective government action in carrying out these activities.

As a result of the amendments made during the committee stage, the bill requires the Ministers of the Environment and Health to conduct research on hormone disrupting substances. I should add that the government has already acted to meet the requirement under a \$40 million toxic substance research initiative, a commitment the government is very proud of.

The legislation requires that all 23,000 substances in Canada are looked at to determine if they are toxic. Committee amendments require the first stage, and the biggest step of this mammoth undertaking, to be completed within seven years. It also incorporates into the legislation key features of the federal toxic substances management policy which sets out precautionary, proactive and accountable rules for dealing with toxic substances; an absolute must, I suggest.

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• (1355)

Bill C-32 incorporates the precautionary principle. This means that the government will not have to wait for full scientific certainty before acting to prevent an environmental harm. Quite simply, our aim is to take all reasonable precautions to reduce or eliminate the exposure of Canadians to toxic substances.

Bill C-32 will impose new deadlines for the development of preventative or control actions. It will require the Minister of the Environment to propose concrete actions to prevent or control the release of substances within two years of declaring a substance toxic. These preventative or control actions must be finalized within the following 18 months. These are the kinds of checks and balances we must have and they are the kinds of checks and balances that the Liberal government puts forward.

The goal of virtual elimination is a new term to the CEPA. The Government of Canada recognized in its 1995 toxic substances management policy that our traditional approach of managing the release of toxic substances into the environment through their life cycle is not sufficient in the environment today. Toxic substances that require stricter management actions result primarily from human activity. They persist in the environment for long periods of time and are referred to as bioaccumulative. They are toxins that are stored in living tissues. Quantities of these substances may build over time to levels that have serious, long term adverse effects to the environment and to human health. Once in the environment—

**The Speaker:** It is almost 2 o'clock and you still have four minutes left in your time. I wonder if you would prefer to have four minutes after rather than just one or two minutes now. If you agree with that, we could go to Statements by Members and then you would have the floor when we come back to debate.

**Mr. Paul Bonwick:** Mr. Speaker, I will resign myself to your direction. If that is most comfortable for the House, I would be more than happy to take part in the debate after question period.

**The Speaker:** We will now proceed to Statements by Members.

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## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*English*]

### WORLD POPULATION DAY

**Mr. John Finlay (Oxford, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, July 11 is World Population Day, a day for us to reflect on the issues that challenge us globally.

A key issue of population and development is access to education for the 1.06 billion people, almost 20% of the world's population between the ages of 15 and 24. This is the largest generation of young people ever in history.

These young people have enormous potential to effect the development of their countries and we must support efforts that encourage their positive involvement in building strong societies. It has been demonstrated that in emerging nations, access to education results in slower population growth, better hygiene and improved economic circumstances.

I therefore encourage the Government of Canada and the Canadian International Development Agency to support initiatives to ensure that young people, especially in developing countries and in our native communities, receive adequate primary education.

\* \* \*

### BILL C-55

**Mr. Charlie Penson (Peace River, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, Bill C-55 is going through the Senate now with last minute amendments to reflect a so-called deal reached with the Americans to provide subsidies to the Canadian magazine industry.

However, there is one thing the government seems to have forgotten. We have commitments under NAFTA and the World Trade Organization which promise something called "national treatment". Any subsidy we give to the Canadian publishers must automatically be made available to American and foreign publishers that are operating in Canada.

I find it absolutely ludicrous that the government would seriously commit to throwing away hard-earned taxpayers' dollars in this fashion. Does the government not understand the international agreements that it has signed?

I say we should forget the subsidies. Let the magazine industry compete on its own merit. We should have more confidence in the abilities of our Canadian publishers to carve out lucrative Canadian markets for themselves without coming to Ottawa cap in hand.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

### THE ENVIRONMENT

**Mr. Yvon Charbonneau (Anjou—Rivière-des-Prairies, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this week, we celebrate Canadian Environment Week, and tomorrow will be the first Clean Air Day in Canada.

The theme this year is Community Action on Clean Air and Climate Change. This day relates to two priorities of the government, those of improving the quality of the air Canadians breathe and of fighting climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

• (1400)

Yesterday, the Minister of the Environment announced proposed new regulations to give Canadians cleaner air and better health protection by reducing air pollutants from gasoline vapor.

The proposed regulations would limit the flow of gasoline to a maximum of 38 liters per minute during vehicle refueling, thereby cutting down on the release of gasoline vapor and limiting environmental damage.

In order to celebrate Clean Air Day—

**The Speaker:** The member for Whitby—Ajax.

\* \* \*

[English]

### LEUKEMIA

**Mrs. Judi Longfield (Whitby—Ajax, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, June is Leukemia Awareness Month. An estimated 3,300 Canadians will be diagnosed with leukemia this year and an estimated 2,100 Canadians will die of leukemia in 1999.

Unfortunately relatively little is known regarding the causes of leukemia. Health Canada is currently studying the causes of leukemia as part of the department's ongoing enhanced cancer surveillance system.

Leukemia accounts for almost one-third of all new cases of cancer in Canadian children and teenagers and is the most common cause of death. Cancer is the second leading cause of death after injuries in Canadian children and adolescents aged one to nineteen.

Health Canada's childhood cancer surveillance and control program will contribute substantially to improved childhood cancer control in Canada through an ongoing surveillance of treatments, outcomes and studies of cancer patients and healthy controls.

The initiative to have June declared Leukemia Awareness Month comes from the Leukemia Research Fund of Canada.

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[Translation]

### 1999 GALIEN CANADA AWARDS

**Mr. Bernard Patry (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on May 13, three Galien Canada awards were given out in Montreal honouring excellence in pharmaceutical research in Canada.

The 1999 award for innovative drug product went to Lipitor—atorvastatine calcium—developed and marketed by Parke-Davis Canada.

The award for research went to Dr. Jack Hirsh, Director of the Hamilton Civic Hospital Centre and Vice-President, Research of

*S. O. 31*

Vascular Therapeutics Inc. for his work in epidemiology and management of venous thrombo-embolic disease.

Finally, the Belleau-Nickerson award, presented to a product that has distinguished itself by making a significant contribution to pharmacotherapy and a social and economic impact, was given to Eli Lilly Canada for its product Prozac—Fluoxetine.

I would like to congratulate all the winners and encourage them in their research.

\* \* \*

[English]

### AGRICULTURE

**Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I regret to inform the House that the farm income crisis on the prairies has resulted in tragedy.

Today I was informed that a Saskatchewan farmer who was struggling to keep his farm operation going committed suicide. That is how bad it is on the prairies. This farmer was willing to take his own life and leave behind his family including two young boys because he could not no longer deal with the struggles of farming.

Our agriculture minister has said that his new farm aid package, AIDA, as well as NISA and crop insurance were enough to get producers through this crisis. Evidently it was not enough for this farmer.

The farm income crisis is far from over. Grain prices are not improving and input costs continue to rise. The number of calls coming into the Saskatchewan farm stress line in 1999 is already well above the monthly average for 1998.

It is time for the government to wake up. Help is needed on the prairies and its current solutions are not working. How many more tragedies does it take before the government realizes that its farm disaster program is not helping the farmers who need it?

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### CANADIAN ECONOMY

**Ms. Raymonde Folco (Laval West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday Statistics Canada announced that the gross domestic product rose 0.3% in March, in part because of a solid performance in most sectors.

The net result of such a performance was a strong economy, which meant job creation in all regions of Canada, and an improved quality of life.

Such statistics also indicate that the Liberal government is assuming responsibility for managing the Canadian economy. As the bottom line, Canadians will be the ones to reap the benefit of the wise decisions our government has taken.

*S. O. 31*

I would remind hon. members that we have continued to work at eliminating the deficit and have encouraged investment in order to stimulate regional economies and job creation.

This is a demonstration, backed up by figures, of the performance of the Liberal government in the areas of finance and—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Charlesbourg.

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**KHALID BUTT**

**Mr. Richard Marceau (Charlesbourg, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be the host, today and tomorrow here on the Hill, of the MP for a day from Charlesbourg, Khalid Butt. He will be with us for 24 hours.

Khalid was the big winner in the second MP for a day contest in the riding of Charlesbourg. He won out over close to 1,200 competitors.

• (1405)

During his time in Ottawa, Khalid will be able to see what being an MP is all about, and will have a taste of the hectic life on Parliament Hill. He and his father, Mahmood Ahmed Butt, will have the opportunity to meet with the leader of the Bloc Quebecois and all of our caucus members. Tomorrow morning, Mr. Speaker, you too will have the pleasure of meeting with this young man.

Khalid, on behalf of all of my colleagues in this House, welcome to parliament. Enjoy your visit.

\* \* \*

**RURAL COMMUNITIES**

**Mr. Denis Paradis (Brome—Missisquoi, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in April of next year, my riding of Brome—Missisquoi will host the Canadian conference on rural communities.

People from all regions of Canada will gather in Magog-Orford to exchange views on the concerns and needs of our country's regions. The conference will deal with important issues relating to rural life which, as members know, is very different from living in urban centres.

I am pleased that an event of that magnitude will take place in Magog-Orford, and I have no doubt that the participants will appreciate our hospitality and our beautiful region.

Rural regions are the soul of this country. They are often the cradle of a rich heritage, a way of life and a mentality that truly reflect the values that have shaped our nation.

[English]

**PRIME MINISTER OF CANADA**

**Mr. Jay Hill (Prince George—Peace River, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker,

Canadians were pleased to see a hero of our own  
Take flight and soar above the clouds, now Julie's on the phone

She's talking to the PM and we can't imagine why  
She'd take time from her busy day to listen to that guy

It really makes you wonder 'cause they're opposites you see  
The differences can be revealed when looked at carefully

Julie, she is out of sight; the PM's out of touch  
Julie makes Canadians proud; the PM? Not so much

Julie makes us raise a glass; the PM makes us fret  
Julie is an astronaut; the PM's a space cadet

Julie gives us hope that if we try we can succeed  
The PM takes all hope away by taxing without heed

Julie works together with her colleagues all the time  
The PM gets the whip out when his don't fall into line

Julie will come home to cheers of hip-hip and hooray  
The only cheers the PM gets is when he goes away.

\* \* \*

**WESTERN CANADIAN TASK FORCE**

**Mr. Jerry Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's task force on the four western provinces had great meetings in the west and British Columbia in May.

In a statement in the House last week the member for Kelowna left a totally false impression in the House. Not only were the meetings a great success but they were very open, open to the press and open to the public.

The member for Kelowna indicated that the Reform Party had to send spies in to see what was happening. Nothing could be further from the truth.

The member for North Vancouver dropped into the hearings and was told what a poor job he had done to represent the area. The member for Kelowna neglected to tell the House that the mayor of Penticton extended her personal thanks to the senator from Okanagan—Similkameen for all the assistance he had given in helping her with all the work in the west.

The Reform member for Kelowna personally thanked the Liberal caucus for helping—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Sackville—Musquodoboit Valley—Eastern Shore.



*S. O. 31***HUMAN RIGHTS***[English]*

**Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Musquodoboit Valley—Eastern Shore, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday in Nova Scotia another landmark decision was set in the country for human rights.

Mr. Wilson Hodder and Mr. Paul Boulais after a four year struggle finally won the right to spousal benefits under the Canadian pension plan after the death of their partners, Mr. Terry Martin in 1994 and Mr. Grant MacNeil in 1995.

Last May, Nova Scotia was the first province to allow same sex benefits for employees. Now it appears that the federal government is prepared to honour the commitment of section 15 of the Canadian human rights charter that each and every one of us is treated legally and equally before the law.

We all know that the loss of a loved one is a tragic event. The grace and dignity displayed by Mr. Hodder and Mr. Boulais show each and every one of us in the House the grace, quality and dignity of these two fine men.

We in the NDP wish to say congratulations to Mr. Hodder and Mr. Boulais and to their legal team of Ms. Lynn Reiersen and Ms. Lara Morris for a job well done.

\* \* \*

*[Translation]***ASBESTOS**

**Mr. Jean-Guy Chrétiën (Frontenac—Mégantic, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, since France's ban on asbestos was announced, Quebec has been trying in every possible way to save this major industry and the numerous jobs that are at stake.

The Bloc Québécois has done the same by inviting diplomats posted here in Ottawa to visit the asbestos region, and by asking the federal government to lodge a complaint with the WTO, something it took over two years to do.

● (1410)

Recently, the Quebec government asked the federal government to allow Quebec officials to plead the case of the Quebec asbestos industry before the WTO. This is a legitimate request, since the case was prepared by Quebec officials.

Why and in the name of what logic did this government decide to exclude the Quebec government from this case, if not to put partisan politics before the interests of Quebecers?

**LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA**

**Mr. Lou Sekora (Port Moody—Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, a recent poll conducted by Ekos Research found that 57% of Canadians would vote Liberal. This support was found right across Canada, which has Liberal support at 58% in British Columbia, 60% in Atlantic Canada, 65% in Ontario and 54% in Quebec.

It comes as no great surprise to me that the Reform Party is losing its support across Canada including in western Canada. With my 26 years in politics I saw it coming.

I have some advice for the Reform Party: do not desert the sinking ship; sell it.

\* \* \*

**GLOBAL VISION**

**Mr. Scott Brison (Kings—Hants, PC):** Mr. Speaker, Global Vision was conceived nine years ago as an opportunity for Canadian youth to better prepare themselves for the challenges of the new world of international business. Today this is becoming more and more important as more than one in three jobs in Canada is created through exports.

Currently youth are being selected from junior team Canada regional training centres, like the one conducted in my home province of Halifax at St. Mary's University last week. Potential candidates are being interviewed in order to select the best possible people to participate in upcoming economic missions including southeast Asia this summer and Latin America in the fall.

I congratulate the partners in the Global Vision program who made all of this possible. They are here today at a special luncheon hosted by the Speaker. I wish all of them the very best as they prepare leaders in global business for Canada for the 21st century. They are doing a terrific job in preparing Canada for these challenges.

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**SKILLS CANADA**

**Mrs. Karen Redman (Kitchener Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, a great Canadian event is happening in my riding of Kitchener Centre, the Skills Canada competition.

Over 1,500 students from across Canada will participate in the Skills Canada competition that highlights the importance of trades and technology. Twenty thousand visitors and spectators are currently descending upon Kitchener for what is sure to be the trade and technology event of the year.

### Oral Questions

The key to this event is partnership. Skills Canada is supported by a variety of private sector companies, the provincial government and the city of Kitchener. Together we have clearly demonstrated a strong commitment to Canada's youth and their future.

I extend my best wishes to the organizers and participants of Skills Canada for a successful event. I look forward to joining it tomorrow.

\* \* \*

### SUMMER INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

**Mr. Rob Anders (Calgary West, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today in the House to extend a warm welcome to the participants in Reform's 1999 summer internship program. This summer 13 students drawn from universities across Canada are in Ottawa to gain valuable experience working for Reform members of parliament in Reform research and communications.

The 1999 Reform summer interns are: Stephen Murphy from Newfoundland; Heather Shillington and Paul Barnes from Nova Scotia; Lana Bryon, Ray Novak, Chris Schafer, Siobhan Thomas and Steve Cull from Ontario; Shuv Majumdar, John Gardner and Pierre Polivre from Alberta; and Heather Brown and Reesha Namasivayam from British Columbia.

Drawn from a pool of over 180 applicants, these 13 individuals represent the best of a new generation of Canadians interested in learning about the parliamentary process and dedicated to building a renewed Canada for the future.

On behalf of the Official Opposition I welcome Reform summer interns and wish them an enjoyable and educational stay.

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[Translation]

### THE ENVIRONMENT

**Ms. Jocelyne Girard-Bujold (Jonquière, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, World Environment Day, proclaimed by the United Nations in 1972 and celebrated on June 5, will be the grand finale to Environment Week. The theme this year is "Community Action on Clean Air and Climate Change".

The environment is a topic of increasing interest to Canadians and Quebecers. That is why individual and group action is so important.

Thanks to the hard work of members of the community, it is becoming possible to meet the challenges of climate change, air and water pollution, and the protection of natural habitats.

Tomorrow, June 2, we will celebrate Clean Air Day. By taking up the challenge to use public transit, motorists in many cities will be contributing to the quality of our environment and of the air we breathe.

• (1415)

During Environment Week, we are proud to celebrate the progress made, but we must continue to encourage more and more people to take up the challenge of the environment.

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## ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

### GOVERNMENT GRANTS

**Mr. Preston Manning (Leader of the Opposition, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the office of Prime Minister is more important than the person who occupies it and the integrity of that office is more important still. Serious allegations have come to light surrounding this Prime Minister's use of public funds particularly in his own riding: grants announced before they were awarded; a personal aide under investigation for influence peddling; contracts awarded to political contributors.

Does the member for Saint-Maurice believe that these actions enhance the integrity of the office of Prime Minister?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, a lot of the words used by the Leader of the Opposition are not at all factual. He refers to aides and so on. What I have done is what every member of parliament has an obligation to do and that is to make sure that the programs that apply to the constituents under the job creation program apply to the people who voted for the member for Saint-Maurice just as the programs apply to the members for Prince George—Peace River, Kootenay—Columbia, Kootenay—Boundary—Okanagan, Dauphin—Swan River, Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Cariboo—Chilcotin, and so on.

**Mr. Preston Manning (Leader of the Opposition, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister tries to excuse these shady activities by saying he is only doing what other MPs are doing.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh.

**The Speaker:** Order, please. I ask the hon. Leader of the Opposition to be very judicious in his choice of words.

**Mr. Preston Manning:** Mr. Speaker, no other MP has arranged a loan and a grant for someone who just bought a hotel from them. That is the Prime Minister's speciality. If it is jobs the Prime Minister wants, why does he not cut taxes in his riding?

Will the Prime Minister not admit that these activities are inexcusable for any member of parliament but particularly for a Prime Minister?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition is so desperate that he is left with

nothing except to try and attack the personal integrity of a member of parliament who is working for his constituents. I have done this for 36 years. With great pride I stand here and say I will always defend the best interests of my constituents so they can have a good living in the great country that is Canada.

**Mr. Preston Manning (Leader of the Opposition, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, this is not just petty patronage and petty abuses of power. This is patronage and abuse of power connected with the office of the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister promised he would be different yet he slipped into a pattern of patronage and cover-up and abuse of power that makes his predecessor look like a saint.

In light of what has now happened, what is the Prime Minister going to do to clear the air?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is standing in this House and he is very clear on what happened. I have helped my electors. If anybody can prove anything, they should have the guts to make an accusation to say that I have benefited personally from any of the things I have done to make sure that my electors were treated like the electors of any riding in Canada.

• (1420)

**Miss Deborah Grey (Edmonton North, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister said he has helped his electors. He sure has helped a couple of them anyway.

Mr. Gauthier got a \$6.3 million CIDA contract. That was after donating more than \$43,000 to the Liberal Party, \$10,000 of which went to the Prime Minister's own campaign for goodness' sake. We also know that Gauthier paid \$525,000 for an undeveloped piece of land from a company in which the Prime Minister has a financial interest.

Why is the Prime Minister sullyng the position and reputation of the office of the Prime Minister this way?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member just made an accusation that is untrue.

I sold the shares of this company before I became Prime Minister in the fall of 1993. It is very clear that I did this. The ethics counsellor said that to the House of Commons.

I know that Reform members are so desperate that they only get pleasure when they are very deep in mud.

**Miss Deborah Grey (Edmonton North, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, deep in mud is one thing the Prime Minister ought to know because he is right there right now.

The Prime Minister promised that things would be different when he was Prime Minister. Well he was right. They are worse. They are different all right.

### Oral Questions

The Prime Minister bent all the rules in announcing a grant before the government department announced it. We know that. He made sure a CIDA contract was awarded to one of his cronies who then turned around and bought a real good deal on land.

Does the Prime Minister not think that the reputation of his office is more important than feathering the nests of his—

**The Speaker:** The right hon. Prime Minister.

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, again accusations.

The minister can give the information about the case. There was a bid. He was the lowest bidder. He put \$2.5 million on the table. The second bidder was \$2.5 million above the bid he made. This is a company that has done business with Hydro-Québec, many other corporations and the federal government over the last 20 years.

They can make all the accusations they want, but if they look at the facts they will recognize that it is the lowest bidder who got the contract as is required by the rules of the administration of the Canadian—

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

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### ASBESTOS

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, as was recently the case in cultural matters, the federal government has yet again cavalierly dismissed a request by the Government of Quebec to be in attendance at the defence of the asbestos issue before the World Trade Organization.

Asbestos is produced in Quebec, and all Quebecers consider that their government in Quebec City is directly affected by the decision that will be made by the WTO.

How does the Prime Minister explain to Quebecers the federal government's refusal to allow the Government of Quebec to be present while it defends Quebec's position before the WTO?

[English]

**Mr. Bob Speller (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister for International Trade, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to tell the hon. member that I disagree with the premise of his question.

In fact, I was in a meeting with the hon. member's minister of trade who said to our Minister for International Trade that he was very pleased with the assistance of the Canadian government in this matter and other trade matters.

[Translation]

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the parliamentary secretary has probably not been very

*Oral Questions*

well informed by his minister, since the Minister for International Trade received a letter from Bernard Landry asking to be present at the defence of asbestos before the WTO. He also called the Minister for International Trade, who rejected the request.

I would like to know how the Canadian federation would be weakened and threatened by the presence of the Government of Quebec in the Canadian delegation at the WTO?

[English]

**Mr. Bob Speller (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister for International Trade, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member should know that the Minister for International Trade in fact has been waiting for such a letter and has not received one.

• (1425)

The hon. member should also know that this is a French regulation. As such the Government of Canada has taken time, has spoken with the industry in Quebec, has spoken with the Government of Quebec and has worked with all the stakeholders to make sure that the strongest possible position is being put forward at the WTO by this government.

[Translation]

**Mr. Benoît Sauvageau (Repentigny, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, for everyone, including the federal government, the expert on asbestos is Quebec. This is so true that federal officials were constantly drawing on this expertise as they prepared the file.

How does the Prime Minister explain the need to draw on Quebec resources in the preparation of the file, but the fact that their presence at the WTO is considered to serve no purpose? Would it not be a further guarantee of success?

[English]

**Mr. Bob Speller (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister for International Trade, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as the trade critic, the hon. member should know that the Government of Canada invites provinces to the table when their specific provincial program is being challenged by another country. In this case it is the Government of France's program that is being challenged by Canada. Through that process the Government of Canada has spoken very closely with all the stakeholders including the Government of Quebec to get all the information it needs to present a very strong case.

[Translation]

**Mr. Benoît Sauvageau (Repentigny, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, it is true but it is an on-site presence we want.

Whether it be the presence of British Columbia to defend the case of Pacific salmon or that of Quebec to defend asbestos, does the federal government not understand that its chances of success increase considerably with the co-operation of those who are really concerned and best informed in the matter?

[English]

**Mr. Bob Speller (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister for International Trade, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as I have said to the hon. member and his leader, the co-operation with the Government of Quebec, as said by its own minister, has been exemplary. He told the Minister for International Trade at a meeting of all the trade ministers that in fact the co-operation was very good.

I will tell the hon. member again, it is the position of the Government of Canada when it is a challenge of a provincial regulation, then the provinces are at the table. In this case it is a challenge of a French government regulation. In fact, it was the Government of Canada, not the Government of Quebec which first took this issue on on behalf of—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Winnipeg—Transcona.

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**ELECTORAL REFORM**

**Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Transcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister.

More and more Canadians are growing dissatisfied with the way our electoral system works. They want a system that encourages them to vote their values. They want a system that encourages them to vote for what they want instead of what they do not want and they want more representative results.

With that in mind, I ask the Prime Minister this. The first past the post system does not do this and lately has tended to regionalize our political parties in parliament. Would the Prime Minister consider establishing an all party committee in the fall to look at electoral reform?

**Hon. Don Boudria (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member across the way will know that we went through a one year review process by a parliamentary committee. No recommendation of the kind that he is speaking of was ever made by his party or anyone else. Also I intend to table improvements to the electoral law very shortly in the House of Commons.

**Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Transcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the committee that the member talks about was not looking at electoral reform.

I asked the Prime Minister a decent policy question. He complains about mud slinging. I ask him a decent policy question and he does not get up on his feet. I am asking him now. This is a decent question. Will he set up a committee in the fall to look at electoral reform?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we have a system that was established in Canada a long time

*Oral Questions*

ago. I know that for almost as long a time the NDP and its equivalent have tried to form a government and they have failed. As they cannot win with that system, they want another one. I think the one we have now has served Canada pretty well so far.

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**GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS**

**Mr. Jim Jones (Markham, PC):** Mr. Speaker, in the past five years Transelec Inc. gave \$28,000 to the Liberal Party, on top of a \$5,000 donation to the Prime Minister in 1993 and a \$10,000 donation to the Prime Minister in 1997. Meanwhile Transelec president and part owner Claude Gauthier paid half a million dollars for land from the Prime Minister's numbered company. It comes as no surprise that Transelec got a \$6.3 million CIDA contract at the expense of legitimate companies like Markham Electric.

• (1430)

Did the Prime Minister, his office or his agent intervene in any way to ensure that his pal was awarded the contract?

**Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister for International Cooperation and Minister responsible for Francophonie, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this contract was awarded according to the rules in place. An independent selection committee picked the winner of this contract. It was given based on the lowest price, \$2.5 million lower than the next bid.

Members opposite have to stop with these innuendoes and accusations. They sully the name of parliamentarians who do their work honestly.

**Mr. Jim Jones (Markham, PC):** Mr. Speaker, the longer the Prime Minister stays in office, the richer his friends become. He hides behind—

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh.

**The Speaker:** Order, please. I want the hon. member to go directly to his question.

**Mr. Jim Jones:** Mr. Speaker, will the Prime Minister tell us if he is staying on for any other reason besides making it to the millennium and lining the pockets of his friends?

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Fraser Valley.

**Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, what a happy coincidence that the lowest bidder on the CIDA contract happened to be the highest contributor to the Liberal campaign.

The Prime Minister justifies this incredible string of coincidences by saying that he is just trying to create jobs in his riding. In spite of his generous use of Canadian taxpayers money, the

unemployment rate in that region has stagnated at more than 12% for the last five years.

Since it is obviously not jobs that the Prime Minister is creating, it seems the only thing that he is creating is increased donations to his elections funds. How does he explain that?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is very important for the member for Saint-Maurice to work for his constituents when the level of unemployment in his riding is so low.

The member should be ashamed to reproach a member of parliament who has been elected for a long time and who has always done his job. He is trying to destroy my reputation because I want the level of unemployment to go down in my riding as I would want for any riding, even the ridings of the people who are making those silly types of accusation because they have nothing else to say in the House of Commons.

**Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, earth to the Prime Minister, the job he is doing in his riding is not working. There is 12% unemployment and it is staying there.

It appears that the Prime Minister has created a new expression which says "It is better to give so that you can receive".

When this member makes public announcements that essentially force officials to do his bidding, when convicted criminals and self-confessed embezzlers receive grants and loans, when businessmen buy land that benefits the Prime Minister, when they receive huge government contracts to follow that up with huge—

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh.

**The Speaker:** Order, please. I ask the hon. member to please go to his question.

**Mr. Chuck Strahl:** Mr. Speaker, when we add that up, the Prime Minister has gone way too far.

Why did the Prime Minister use the prestige of his office to benefit his political party and himself?

**Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister for International Cooperation and Minister responsible for Francophonie, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, these innuendoes are absolutely unacceptable.

This contract was awarded by an independent committee made up of representatives of the government of Mali and one outside contractor. CIDA was there as an observer only. There was nobody from the Prime Minister's office present.

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[*Translation*]

**ASBESTOS**

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Internation-

*Oral Questions*

al Trade indicated earlier that he was still waiting for a letter from the Government of Quebec on the asbestos issue.

He is probably not up to date on the matter, because his minister received a letter on January 27, 1999 from the Government of Quebec repeating its request to be directly involved in all stages of the proceedings.

This is my question for the Prime Minister: What the explanation is for the federal government's refusal to make room for Quebec on the Canadian delegation in this specific issue of asbestos, when it is debated at the WTO?

[English]

**Mr. Bob Speller (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister for International Trade, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in January 1999 the minister of Quebec sent a letter to the Government of Canada requesting that. It was later said that the premier of Quebec wanted to write the Prime Minister on this issue to make it much more strongly and we have not yet received that letter.

• (1435)

The hon. member knows that the Government of Canada has consulted widely, not only with the industry and the stakeholders but with the Government of Quebec. We have asked for its advice and we are presenting its arguments today before the WTO.

[Translation]

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of International Trade's response to the Government of Quebec on March 5 was a bit of a farce. He wrote "This is why, under the circumstances, I cannot respond favourably to your request to take part in the coming hearings of the special WTO group on the Canada-France dispute concerning asbestos".

I ask the Prime Minister, who is perhaps better informed, where the terrible threat would be to Canada, to the Canadian federation, in having Quebec representation in the asbestos dispute in the WTO, even if this is, in the eyes of the Quebec Liberal MPs, asking too much, since they are so used to making no demands?

[English]

**Mr. Bob Speller (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister for International Trade, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member should know that Liberal members on this side have approached the Government of Canada, the Prime Minister and the Minister for International Trade. They lobbied very hard on behalf of their province to make sure that a strong position was put forward at the WTO.

The March response was Quebec's response to the letter sent by the Minister for International Trade. In a sense, Quebec told the minister at that time that because it was a French situation it wanted to deal with it and that the Government of Canada does not provide a seat for the—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Calgary—Nose Hill.

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**GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS**

**Mrs. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary—Nose Hill, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister would have us believe that Shawinigan is the coincidence capital of Canada.

When Mr. Duhaime received nearly \$1 million in federal government money to refurbish the hotel beside the Prime Minister's golf course, a grant that helped to increase the value of the golf course, was it just by coincidence?

When Mr. Gauthier received a \$6.3 million CIDA contract after he bought land owned by the Prime Minister's cash starved golf course was it just another coincidence?

Why did the Prime Minister use the public's money to reward favours and buy votes?

**The Speaker:** Order, please. These questions are impugning motives. I am going to permit the Prime Minister to answer this question, but I think we are over the line here.

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, again, we have reference to a golf course that has not belonged to me since November 1993.

If they have any decency, they will make a clear accusation that I have a conflict of interest and have the guts to make it outside. We will meet them in court after that.

**Mrs. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary—Nose Hill, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's own ethics counsellor has said publicly that the Prime Minister knew in January 1996 that the sale of his part ownership in the golf course had not and would not go through. He is therefore wrong when he says he does not own it any more.

People who had business dealings with this same property have mysteriously come up with grants, loans and CIDA contracts. Is it not true that the Prime Minister's personal financial interest in these related business dealings puts him in a clear conflict of interest?

• (1440)

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will believe until I die that I sold the share in 1993. I was informed by my trustees that the money has not been paid. I tried to get paid. I quit this company before I became Prime Minister. I have had no interests at all in that golf course since that day. This has been made very clear but members continue to make accusations and innuendo. They continue to make this accusation of conflict of interest inside of the House where I cannot take them to court.

*Oral Questions*

The members of that party are desperate because they are sinking. They have absolutely no sense of respect for the institution and the sense of honour.

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[*Translation*]

**ASBESTOS**

**Mr. Pierre Brien (Témiscamingue, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, as the self-styled backroom boy of the federation, the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs claims to be the one who brings Quebec's concerns to the attention of his cabinet colleagues.

Can the minister tell us what sort of advice he has given the Minister for International Trade that he is refusing to allow Quebec to be present to defend asbestos before the World Trade Organization?

**Hon. Stéphane Dion (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, backroom boy is the nicest thing the member has ever called me, and I thank him.

Second, Quebec will be present at the table, because Quebecers are Canadians, and the Government of Quebec has been extensively consulted. There have been no fewer than 23 meetings between October 6, 1998 and April 29, 1999. The Government of Quebec helped draft the Canadian submission and will be briefed every evening of these important negotiations with respect to asbestos.

**Mr. Pierre Brien (Témiscamingue, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, Quebec is the second largest producer of asbestos in the world. Can the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, who has given much thought to federations around the world, tell us why the fact that Quebec is accompanying the federal government to defend asbestos before the World Trade Organization constitutes a threat to Canada's unity?

**Hon. Stéphane Dion (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, winning a round against the WTO means playing by the WTO's rules. That is very important. There can be no question of the loot politics the Bloc Québécois usually relies on in trying to achieve winning conditions. This is too important.

The rule is that, if one of Quebec's regulations were involved, the Government of Quebec would be an observer at the table. But a regulation of the French government is at issue. We want to win, and we are going to play by the rules and do just that.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh.

**The Speaker:** Order, please. The hon. member for Cypress Hills—Grasslands.

[*English*]

**GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS**

**Mr. Lee Morrison (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, this question is to the Prime Minister.

Claude Gauthier purchased half a million dollars worth of land from the Prime Minister's golf course. Coincidentally, it was just a month after his company received \$6.3 million in a CIDA contract.

The Prime Minister makes a lot of his ability to represent his constituents. Did he ever make representations on behalf of his constituent, Gauthier, to the minister then responsible for CIDA, the current Minister of Human Resources Development?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I never mentioned anything to the minister.

**Mr. Lee Morrison (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, my supplementary is to the Minister of Human Resources Development.

The minister said in the House last October 9, "The Prime Minister has never lobbied or influenced me. Good projects are part of the role of a good member of parliament".

Given that the minister prides himself in his objectivity, will he tell the House whether or not the Prime Minister or his representatives ever approached him for a CIDA contract for Claude Gauthier and his company?

• (1445)

**Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister for International Cooperation and Minister responsible for Francophonie, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, perhaps if I keep repeating the same thing over and over the people across the way will understand.

It was an independent selection committee made up of two representatives of the Mali government, an outside consultant, with a CIDA observer that gave this contract to this firm. That is the way it was done. It followed the rules.

These people are too busy trying to sully the name of a person who served Canada for over 35 years.

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[*Translation*]

**INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM**

**Mrs. Pierrette Venne (Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, on the weekend, the Minister of Finance opened the door to a third phase of the infrastructure program. However, the minister provided very few details.

*Oral Questions*

Can the government give us the assurance that the provinces will be in charge of the possible third phase that was announced on the weekend?

**Hon. Marcel Massé (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for Infrastructure, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the first infrastructure program was clearly a success.

It was a success because it was a model of co-operation between the municipalities, the provincial governments and the federal government.

If a new infrastructure program is put in place, and no one gave assurances to that effect, even though municipalities often ask us for such a program, we will try to apply to same rules that were used during the first phase of the infrastructure program, precisely because it was so successful.

\* \* \*

[English]

**POVERTY**

**Ms. Sophia Leung (Vancouver Kingsway, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Labour.

There is much concern across Canada about the needs of low income families and children, and the problems of poverty and homelessness in particular. What has the minister done to address these issues?

**Hon. Claudette Bradshaw (Minister of Labour, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we have put in place a secretariat. We have 19 different departments which deal with homelessness and we are co-ordinating the program so that we can meet the needs of the homeless.

We have also put 10 facilitators in 10 Canadian communities who are going to work with the municipalities and the provinces to make sure that all of the programs for the homeless are co-ordinated.

I will be travelling all of July and part of August to meet with the municipalities and the provinces, as well as various non-profit groups.

\* \* \*

**GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS**

**Mr. Jason Kenney (Calgary Southeast, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, let us review the facts. First a friend of the Prime Minister's gives him \$15,000 in contributions for his personal re-election campaign. Then he gives another \$28,000 to the Liberal Party of Canada. Then he buys a parcel of land from the Prime Minister's numbered company for over \$500,000. Lo and behold, the same Mr. Gauthier received a \$6.3 million CIDA contract and was subcontracted to do a \$190,000 paving job on the Prime Minister's driveway.

If this is not a conflict of interest, just what is a conflict of interest?

**Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister for International Cooperation and Minister responsible for Francophonie, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, whatever happened to a new way of doing things in the House of Commons? I have never seen such despicable behaviour.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh.

**The Speaker:** Order, please.

**Hon. Diane Marleau:** Mr. Speaker, I guess when one hits a sore point members opposite understand.

I have been in the House for over 10 years and never have I seen such shameful behaviour by members of parliament. They are sully the names of all parliamentarians, including their own, by this kind of behaviour.

**Mr. Jason Kenney (Calgary Southeast, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the minister is right. I thought we were going to get a different kind of government. The Liberal red book said: "This erosion of confidence seems to have many causes; some have to do with the behaviour of certain elected politicians, others with an arrogant style of political leadership".

If we had seen this same pattern under the previous Conservative government, the Liberals would have been crying bloody murder and the Minister of Canadian Heritage would have been jumping over furniture.

Will the Prime Minister tell us how he can excuse himself from this kind of very clear conflict of interest?

• (1450)

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I believe I have been very clear. I will repeat that I sold the shares of this company before I became Prime Minister.

I know that the truth does not interest them. I know how nervous they are because what was to be the united alternative is the de-united alternative. I am sorry that most probably their leader will disappear. He is a great asset to the Liberal Party.

\* \* \*

**CANADA POST**

**Ms. Angela Vautour (Beauséjour—Petitcodiac, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, rural and remote regions have seen a decline in services from Canada Post. A supermailbox cannot replace a helpful Canada Post employee.

Canada Post could find \$200 million to give to the government. However, it cannot find a penny to increase rural services and provide rural route carriers with basic rights.

When will this government stop siphoning millions of dollars from Canada Post and start reinvesting in services for our rural communities so that every Canadian will receive the same level of service?



*Oral Questions*

**Hon. Alfonso Gagliano (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Canada Post is working very hard to improve service in rural communities. As a matter of fact, for the first time mail is being processed in rural communities. Previously it was sent to major urban centres.

We are looking at ways to improve the policy for giving contracts for mail route delivery. We are working very hard and we will continue to work hard. What is important is that Canadians receive good postal service and can have trust in their post office.

The results, audited by two auditors, tell us that we are—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Acadie—Bathurst.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

**NATURAL RESOURCES**

**Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, in the same advertorial of the *Atlantic Progress* that I referred to yesterday, the Minister of Natural Resources stressed that the east coast oil and natural gas resources are developing and expanding.

In particular, the minister said he was excited by the significant new economic opportunities that this development would bring to the Atlantic provinces.

My question is for the Minister of Natural Resources. May northeastern New Brunswick also rejoice and benefit from the economic opportunities to which the minister is referring?

[*English*]

**Hon. Ralph E. Goodale (Minister of Natural Resources and Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, judging by the hon. gentleman's news releases, which contain the most intemperate and insulting language, I doubt that he really expects a serious answer to what should be a serious question for the people of Atlantic Canada.

In fact, the development of offshore resources holds huge potential for the people of Atlantic Canada. This government has helped to foster those resources.

In terms of the development of laterals within the boundaries of a province, that obviously falls within provincial jurisdiction. It may also be of interest to regional development agencies. As far as the Department of Natural Resources is concerned, the economics—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough.

**GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS**

**Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister can do three simple things to clear the air over this growing scandal.

He can release the 363 pages withheld from the member for Markham's access to information requests. He can disclose all of the documents regarding the CIDA contract to Claude Gauthier. He could direct the auditor general to investigate this entire matter by invoking section 11 of the Auditor General Act.

I ask the Prime Minister, why will he not do these three simple things?

**Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister for International Cooperation and Minister responsible for Francophonie, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the contract was awarded according to the rules in place at the time. It was a competitive process. It was awarded by an independent committee to the person with the lowest bid. It was \$2.5 million lower than the other bid.

**Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Prime Minister spoke of being a good member of parliament. Good members of parliament certainly should not approve grants and loans to questionable individuals in their ridings, particularly before receiving departmental approval. Certainly, a good member of parliament should not be funneling \$6.3 million to Liberal supporters who bailed out his own troubled numbered company.

• (1455)

Can the Prime Minister explain how such a blatant abuse of taxpayers' money is his definition of being a good member of parliament?

**Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister for International Cooperation and Minister responsible for Francophonie, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Transelec has done work with CIDA before. It actually worked on a contract awarded in 1985 to do similar work in Togo. To my recollection it was the Mulroney government that was in power at the time.

\* \* \*

**INFRASTRUCTURE**

**Mr. Mac Harb (Ottawa Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it has been reported recently that the government may be considering the introduction of a new infrastructure program to help with rebuilding roads and bridges.

I know my colleagues in the Tory party are not interested, but I would ask the President of the Treasury Board if that is the case and if such plans are in the works.

*Oral Questions*

**Hon. Marcel Massé (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for Infrastructure, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, given the success of the infrastructure program there is no doubt that quite a number of municipalities would like to see it renewed.

In terms of need, there is no doubt that there is a need and we are ready to listen to the various requests to see if they fit within our budgetary framework.

\* \* \*

**GOVERNMENT GRANTS**

**Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, let us hope that no new infrastructure program requires the approval of the local MP. We can see that might just be a bit of a problem.

After 36 years of political IOUs, it is now payback time, big time. Mr. Gauthier contributes tens of thousands of dollars to the Prime Minister's campaign and to the Liberal—

**The Speaker:** Order, please. I want the hon. member to go to his question.

**Mr. Monte Solberg:** Mr. Speaker, my question is very simple. Is the Prime Minister so ethically and morally blind that he cannot see a problem with this?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I think that any sensible person would understand that when there is a bid and one bidder is \$2.5 million lower than the second bidder, the government got a good deal when it gave that contract.

The opposition would not be very happy if the bidder had not received the contract and the government had spent \$2.5 million giving it to a contractor who nobody knew. We saved \$2.5 million in giving this contract to the lowest bidder. For me it is very clear and I am very happy with the system because it is doing what has to be done for the good of the taxpayers of Canada.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

**EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE**

**Mrs. Christiane Gagnon (Québec, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, for years the Minister of Human Resources Development has been hemming and hawing, hiding behind unfinished studies, rather than announcing the changes that would restore some sense to the employment insurance program.

Does the minister realize that, at a party meeting in Quebec this weekend, his colleague the Minister of Finance also said that he was waiting for the essential corrective measures to employment insurance? What, then, is the Minister of Human Resources Development waiting for before moving on this, since he is the only one responsible for the delay?

**Hon. Pierre S. Pettigrew (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance acknowledged what we all acknowledge, that our government has a duty to control, and to very closely monitor, the impacts and consequences of our employment insurance reform.

I have stated in this House that we were aware that there were certain difficulties, particularly those relating to women's access to employment insurance. At this time we are involved in an examination of a number of proposals on what we could do to facilitate the situation. This is quite simply our duty to the people of Canada.

\* \* \*

[*English*]

**THE BUDGET**

**Hon. Lorne Nystrom (Regina—Qu'Appelle, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, in case the Minister of Finance is enjoying this question period, I have a question for him.

• (1500)

There are hundreds of capable public servants in his department who are able to write budget speeches. Yet the minister paid \$104,000 of taxpayers money to three outside consultants to polish a 29 page speech. That is at a cost of \$3,500 a page. Let us hope the minister does not catch a case of verbal diarrhea; he would bankrupt the country.

I know the minister is obsessed with his image, but can he tell us why he paid so much money to three Liberal hacks?

**Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, that is a little like the pot calling the kettle black.

Let me simply say that it was not for speech writing. Certainly it was part of the reason, but in addition there was an entire communications plan, an entire strategic plan laid out.

As well, in the busiest four months before the budget there was the whole question of setting up the website. We were one of the one of the hottest websites in North America following the budget. I would recommend to all members after the next budget that they look at our website. It is really worth while.

\* \* \*

**TAXATION**

**Mr. Gerald Keddy (South Shore, PC):** Mr. Speaker, I have asked the Minister of Natural Resources on many occasions if he is considering a carbon tax. The answer has repeatedly been no. Yet a 25 member transportation panel looking at ways to reduce greenhouse gases states that transportation bureaucrats, lobbyists and business representatives are closely examining a fuel tax.

My question is fundamental. If the government is not interested in a carbon tax, why is a 25 member panel examining a fuel tax?

**Hon. Ralph E. Goodale (Minister of Natural Resources and Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, at the beginning of the follow-up process after Kyoto the provinces and the federal government agreed that there should be an open, inclusive, transparent process involving all Canadians in which all options would be reviewed and the costs and the benefits analysed so that all governments, not just the Government of Canada but the provinces, the municipalities, the private sector and all Canadians, could have a full and rational assessment of all the costs and all the benefits.

\* \* \*

### VACANCY

SASKATOON—ROSETOWN—BIGGAR

**The Speaker:** It is my duty to inform the House that a vacancy has occurred in the representation, namely, Mr. Chris Axworthy, member for the electoral district of Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar, by resignation effective May 31, 1999.

Pursuant to subsection 25(1)(b) of the Parliament of Canada Act, I have addressed today my warrant to the Chief Electoral Officer for the issue of a writ for the election of a member to fill this vacancy.

\* \* \*

● (1505)

### THE LATE DOUGLAS HARKNESS

**Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC):** Mr. Speaker, it is with sadness but also honour that I rise today to pay tribute to the late Hon. Douglas Harkness who died in Calgary at the age of 96.

His gallantry during World War II was recognized by the awarding to him of the George Medal, truly an exemplary accomplishment.

Mr. Harkness was elected to the House of Commons in 1945 and retired in 1972 as the member for Calgary Centre. Those 27 years of public service were ones of great change and great challenge in Canada. He helped mould those changes on both sides of the House and in the cabinet room.

Those members who came to parliament after the second world war must have been a very distinct breed. They came from the battlefields directly into the House, determined to build a great nation. They recognized the debt owed to their comrades in arms.

### Tributes

They had a vision of a better country and they set about to bring that vision to fruition.

This was reflected in Mr. Harkness' first speech in this place. He had served in the Royal Canadian Artillery and yet his first act when he appeared in the House of Commons was to make a plea for better treatment for the foot soldiers in the Canadian Armed Forces, the lowest paid men whom he regarded as being part of the most significant effort in the war in Europe. He championed better pay and conditions for the services which are more in keeping with the risks they run and the conditions they endure.

The Canada that we see today is different from what we saw in 1945. Douglas Harkness and his family, his wife and son who predeceased him, helped build this into a better nation.

I am very honoured to stand in this place and express the thanks of Canadians for his decades of public service and express our regrets and sympathies to his family on behalf of the Progressive Conservative Party of Canada.

**Hon. Anne McLellan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to offer a tribute on behalf of the government to the Hon. Douglas Scott Harkness who served his country with integrity and conviction both in the military arena of World War II and in the political arena of the House of Commons between 1945 and 1972.

[Translation]

As a member from Alberta, I am particularly honoured to recognize the political and military contributions of Mr. Harkness.

[English]

Douglas Harkness distinguished himself at war through his courage. Indeed he was awarded the George Medal for bravery for his actions in helping to evacuate troops when a flagship he was aboard was torpedoed. He earned the respect of his superiors and was promoted to lieutenant colonel and served as a commander during the invasion of Normandy.

Upon his return from the war Douglas Harkness demonstrated his leadership qualities by helping to shape the political landscape of his country. First elected as MP for the riding of Calgary East in 1945, he was returned after the redistribution of seats as the MP for Calgary North.

Under Prime Minister Diefenbaker, Douglas Harkness served in a variety of portfolios, including Minister of Northern Affairs and Natural Resources, Minister of Agriculture and Minister of National Defence. For a time he was Alberta's only representative in cabinet.

One of his legacies as Minister of Agriculture was to bring a degree of stability to agriculture by establishing the Prairie Farm Assistance Act. He maintained his attachment to the land and was

*Tributes*

very proud of it. In fact, even as he represented his constituents in Ottawa, he continued to file his income tax as a proud farmer.

Of course that for which he will be most remembered politically is his stand as Minister of National Defence on the issue of nuclear arms. At odds with then Prime Minister Diefenbaker as to whether Canada should arm its Bomarc missiles with nuclear warheads, Douglas Harkness tendered his resignation. In his statement to the House on February 4, 1963, he stated:

I resigned as a matter of principle. The point was finally reached when I considered that my honour and integrity required that I take that step.

It was a division, a stand which would lead to the defeat of the Diefenbaker government. For only the second time in Canadian history a government was overthrown by a vote of non-confidence in the House of Commons.

• (1510)

Teacher, farmer, soldier, legislator, Douglas Harkness exemplified the ability to both serve and lead. Having left an indelible mark on the military and political landscape of the country, he was inducted as an Officer of the Order of Canada in 1978.

On behalf of the government I would like to ask all colleagues to take the time to reflect on the contributions of a former politician, a man of principle, a fellow Albertan, who made a real difference in the country's history.

**Mrs. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary—Nose Hill, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to salute a great Canadian and Calgarian, the Hon. Douglas Scott Harkness.

Douglas Harkness has been described as a man of gracious character, of steely resolve and a true gentleman, a good combination. He was a teacher and a farmer, an outstanding soldier, politician and statesman, so he fully deserves the appellation "great".

Mr. Harkness developed an interest in politics while teaching school. Small wonder perhaps, for the school's principal was William Aberhart, the first leader of the Social Credit movement in Canada.

While overseas in 1945, Lieutenant Colonel Harkness was proposed as the federal candidate for Calgary East. He was notified by cable and accepted the nomination after consulting with his fellow officers. He was elected in Calgary East in 1945 and returned to parliament in 1949.

Following the 1952 redistribution he was elected in the constituency of Calgary North, the riding I now represent as Calgary—Nose Hill. Mr. Harkness was elected in that riding in 1953, 1957, 1958, 1962, 1963, 1965 and 1968. Nine election victories are a

testimony to the high regard in which Calgarians held Mr. Harkness.

Appointed to the cabinet in 1957 he subsequently served as Minister of Agriculture. He took great pride in securing programs to assist the farming community. Mr. Harkness was appointed Minister of National Defence in 1960 at a time when Canadians were vigorously debating foreign and defence policy, particularly surrounding the cancellation of the Avro Arrow and the introduction of the Bomarc missile with its nuclear warhead.

During the Cuban missile crisis of 1962, Minister Harkness took a politically courageous and very responsible decision to place the Canadian military in a state of high alert despite the indecisiveness of the prime minister of the day. Mr. Harkness continued to disagree with the prime minister on issues of national defence and resigned from the cabinet. The government fell in a non-confidence motion the next day. Mr. Harkness was re-elected, as pointed out earlier, and served in the opposition until his retirement in 1972.

The military career of Mr. Harkness, while briefer, was as brilliant as his political record. A militia officer, he went overseas in 1939 as a captain in the artillery. He served in Britain, Sicily, Italy, France and Northwest Europe, the last year as a lieutenant colonel and commanding officer of the fifth anti-tank regiment in the fourth armoured division. He was awarded the George Medal in 1943 for his action in organizing the evacuation of a troop ship that was torpedoed on route from England to Italy.

Much more could be said about this wonderful man, his early years, his distinguished family, his combat record and his achievements in the community. I have only touched the surface. I am honoured to have been able to stand here and pay a brief tribute to Mr. Harkness, a most outstanding and remarkable man.

I join with others in the House and in Canada in extending condolences to the family and friends of this great Canadian.

• (1515)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Bernard Bigras (Rosemont, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Douglas Scott Harkness, former member and minister, who died on May 2 at the age of 96.

Mr. Harkness was born in Toronto in 1903. He studied at the University of Alberta, after his family moved to that province in 1910. He was a teacher and a farmer. During the second world war, he served in the armed forces in Europe from 1940 to 1945.

It was, in fact, while he was in Europe that he received a telegram asking him to run as a Conservative in the general election of June 1945. He was first elected to the House of Commons to represent the voters of Calgary East.

During his career in politics, he served as northern affairs and natural resources critic. In 1957, he was appointed Minister of Natural Resources and acting Minister of Agriculture. He served as Minister of Agriculture until 1960, when he was appointed Minister of National Defence.

As such, he took part in the important debate that caused such a furor at the time on the appropriateness of the Canadian Armed Forces having nuclear weapons. The position he defended on this did not prevail and he accordingly resigned his post in 1963. He continued to represent the voters of Calgary Centre until 1972.

After retiring from political life, Mr. Harkness returned to agriculture. In 1978, he received the Order of Canada.

On behalf of my colleagues in the Bloc Québécois and on my behalf, I would like to extend my sincere condolences to his family and friends.

[*English*]

**Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Transcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the NDP caucus I would like to join with representatives of other parties and all members of the House of Commons in expressing our condolences to the family of the late Mr. Douglas Harkness and in saying a few words of tribute to his career in this place, to his service to his country during World War II and to his work as a teacher and a farmer.

I remember the night Mr. Harkness resigned. I was only 12 years old but I was paying attention to politics at the time. I remember that when Mr. Harkness resigned it precipitated the fall of the Diefenbaker government in 1963. This was something to be noted, not the resignation per se or the fall of the government, but the fact that somebody would resign on a matter of principle knowing the consequences for himself personally and knowing the consequences for the government led by his own party.

This is something that happens rarely in Canadian politics, too rarely I might say. I am sure there are occasions when this would have been the thing to do but it is not done any more. It is a tradition of Canadian parliamentary life which has fallen on bad times and is no longer thought to be the thing to do.

I remember that with respect, even though the principle on which Mr. Harkness resigned is not a principle I shared with him. I am sure my NDP colleagues at the time did not agree with him with respect to the arming of Bomarc missiles with nuclear weapons. Nevertheless it was a principle he held and upheld and was willing to go to the wall for politically. We have to admire that.

### *Government Orders*

We pay tribute to that and to his 27 years in this place, to his distinguished military career. As I said before, we extend to his family our sincere condolences.

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

### CANADIAN ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION ACT, 1999

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-32, an act respecting pollution prevention and the protection of the environment and human health in order to contribute to sustainable development, be read the third time and passed.

• (1520)

**Mr. Paul Bonwick (Simcoe—Grey, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues for waiting with bated breath over question period to hear my closing remarks on the issue of Bill C-32 and more specifically concentrating on the toxic substance contents of the legislation.

As I was mentioning, the quantity of these substances can build up over time. They cause long term, serious, adverse health effects both to the environment and to people. Once in the environment these substances will continue to damage our health and the health of our ecosystems over many generations through a subtle effect of endocrine, immune, reproductive and other sensitive biological systems. Virtual elimination is necessary to protect our health and that of our environment.

Bill C-32 allows for creative approaches in controlling toxic substances to achieve results faster and to provide greater flexibility. A reactive or control management approach is often costly and time consuming. In some circumstances traditional regulations remain the best solution. However, they are only one of several tools that Bill C-32 places at our disposal. These tools include pollution prevention plans, voluntary initiatives and economic instruments such as tradable permits to control toxic substances.

These new tools focus on environmental results rather than the means by which they are achieved. They give operators the flexibility to incorporate cost effective measures that suit the needs without the direct intervention of the government as long as the required environmental protection objectives are met. This results often in a greater reduction in toxic emissions that would otherwise be achieved through traditional regulatory approaches.

Canada can learn from actions of other countries as well. For example, Bill C-32 requires the federal government to review the decisions and control actions of toxic substances taken by other

*Government Orders*

countries to determine if they are relevant and applicable to Canadian situations. The government will regularly review decisions taken by provinces in Canada or by member countries of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development to substantially restrict toxic substances.

We have listened to the concerns of Canadians about toxic substances. I believe the environmental legislation before us today addresses these concerns. A strengthened CEPA will provide the Government of Canada with the tools needed to protect the Canadian environment and the health of Canadians.

I urge the House to support the legislation and give it speedy passage so that Canada will be an environmental leader in the 21st century. It is our responsibility as members of parliament, as the Government of Canada and as proud Canadian citizens to make sure this piece of legislation goes through. Our children and our environment are depending on it.

**Mrs. Karen Kraft Sloan (York North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, a couple of years ago a concerned citizen came to my office in the riding of York North. He was very concerned about the health of the trumpeter swan in the Wye Marsh. He was very concerned about what was happening around lead contamination. I understand the member for Simcoe—Grey has some of the Wye Marsh within his riding. I was wondering what he was doing to help his constituents on this very important problem.

**Mr. Paul Bonwick:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. colleague for her question. It is an issue that is certainly near and dear to my heart and impacts my riding as well as ridings all across the country.

As late as about three weeks ago I introduced a private member's bill banning lead sinkers and jigs. Although it was deemed to be a non-votable item at that point in time, we were successful in securing the support of the Minister of the Environment. At this time I would certainly like to thank her and congratulate her for rising to the challenge.

The lead sinkers and jigs issue that is impacting Canadians all across the country is a crucial issue and it is a hidden issue. Most people in the House and in fact all across the country did not realize the severity of the situation regarding the deposit of lead sinkers and jigs in our Canadian waters. At that time I drew a scenario. It is actually taking place as we speak today and throughout most of the year. It boils down to that this legislation will help through community buy ins, support in that sector and identifying it as such a toxic substance as it is in Bill C-32.

Between 500 and 600 tonnes of lead are deposited in Canadian waters every year. The analogy I used was approximately 500 half-ton pick-ups fully loaded with lead lined up bumper to bumper. That is the kind of situation which is taking place with respect to lead being dumped in Canadian waters.

• (1525)

I was proud to address that issue on behalf of not only the constituents of Simcoe—Grey, but also people who are impacted in all areas of Canada. That is certainly one measure where I think the government has been very proactive and will continue to be so.

**Mrs. Karen Kraft Sloan (York North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, three weeks ago 28 experts, scientists, medical doctors, researchers, environmental lawyers and public policy experts gathered on Parliament Hill and met with members of parliament and senators at EcoSummit '99. The summit examined air pollution, the link to human health and what is required for healthy public policy development.

Two very important messages emerged. First, the health and scientific experts unanimously agreed that medical and ecological information clearly indicates that we face pressing health problems as a result of airborne contaminants. Second, we as parliamentarians have a responsibility to act and we must act now in the public interest.

EcoSummit participants, eminent leaders in their fields including a former Royal Society president, felt it was crucial to bring their research to the attention of parliamentarians. There is a fundamental need to develop a relationship of collaboration between scientists and parliamentarians to promote healthy public policy.

Dr. David Bates, a pioneer in and an internationally renowned expert on the study of air pollution in human health for over 50 years asked tough questions about Canada's readiness to take up the challenge of effectively dealing with the problem of airborne contaminants and human health. In his important book *Environmental Health Risks and Public Policy: Decision Making in Free Societies*, Dr. Bates provides an approach for better integrating medical and health public policy making. Dr. Bates clearly takes a stand on the side of public health.

In his book he quotes American Senator Edward Muskie and principal author of the 1970 Clean Air Act amendments. Senator Muskie said:

Our responsibility is to establish what the public interest requires to protect the health of persons. This may mean that people and industries will be asked to do what seems impossible at the present time. But if health is to be protected, these challenges must be met. I am convinced they can be met.

And so am I. Unfortunately, Bill C-32 will not do this. Throughout this debate I have implored my colleagues on both sides of the House to consider very carefully the impact of the amendments that we had before us at report stage. Now I ask my colleagues to very carefully consider the effect of this legislation in its final form.

Let us not forget our duties and obligations as parliamentarians. We must first establish what the public interest requires to protect the health of persons. This is our challenge.

*Government Orders*

The fundamental question before us now is, is Bill C-32 written as if the health of Canadians mattered? How each of us in the House responds to this question as our words are recorded in the *Hansard* of this debate or in the way we vote tonight on third reading will define us.

I have heard members in the House say that we must balance the environmental concerns with economic concerns, that without economic growth and profit we will not have the resources we need to protect the environment. This is absurd. They forget that without a healthy environment the economy will suffer. Have any of the members opposite heard anything about the Atlantic and the Pacific fishing industries?

Trickle down economic policies have not worked for the poor. To the contrary, the gap between the rich and the poor has widened. Trickle down environmental protection will not work either. The connections among economic, equity and ecological factors are inextricably woven. It is in fact a seamless web of interdependency. It is irrational, foolhardy and dangerous to overlook this.

The aggressive industrial assault against any positive environmental measures in Bill C-32 is precedent setting. The fact that parliament has so fully incorporated their concerns is shameful.

• (1530 )

As one of three Liberal members who has worked on this bill from before its inception during the original CEPA review in 1994, through the government response in Bill C-74, CEPA 1996 and the committee process reviewing Bill C-32, CEPA 1998, I would have to say that the bill currently before the House is a pale reflection of the piece of legislation it could be, a bill that has been fought over by this unprecedented industrial lobbyist assault, by the machinations of other government departments and by pressure from the provinces.

What has finally emerged is a bill weakened by a thousand cuts, a bill so anemic it cannot be supported. My decision not to support Bill C-32 has been made after much thought and deliberation.

For the past five years I have spoken with leading experts from the fields of health, ecology, law and economics, and it is very clear that most recommendations that would make this bill a good bill were ignored.

For months during committee hearings and now during the days of debate in the House some of my colleagues and I have continued to raise issues of concern. Unfortunately there are many. I would like to reiterate only some of the most problematic ones.

There has been a weakening of the virtual elimination provisions. The residual nature of CEPA has been emphasized by

restricting the authority of the Minister of the Environment to act in relation to other departments.

Additional barriers to action by the federal government have been created by lining the bill with the harmonization agreement with the provinces. Overall new hurdles have been created on acting in a precautionary way. There has been a shift away from pollution prevention.

While there are elements in Bill C-32 that would improve the existing CEPA, for example the electronic environmental registry, legislation of the National Pollutants Release Inventory and new powers for enforcement, these do little to overcome the cumulative damage made by all the other changes that weaken Bill C-32.

If I were to rewrite Bill C-32 I would ensure that it was real pollution prevention legislation, that there was a focus on generation and use, not just releases. I would ensure that pollution prevention plans were mandatory and automatic once toxic substances have been identified and not have to wait for a listing of toxics.

Pollution prevention planning leads to eco-efficiency for firms, which means better toxics management, reducing costs for industry and government. As well, the Ministers of the Environment and Health should be the ones making environmental and health decisions, not economic ministries.

More than anything, if I were to rewrite this bill I would make sure that CEPA respected subpopulations such as children. Children are not small adults. If we set environmental standards which created healthy public policy, as if the health of our children mattered, then everyone would gain.

There are other groups of Canadians who require special attention. Canada's northern people live with the consequences of toxic chemicals that are created outside of their homelands. They catch food that is contaminated and mothers' breast milk has unacceptable high levels of PCBs. If we respect these Canadians we must write environmental legislation as if their health mattered.

If I were to rewrite this bill I would listen to the hundreds of witnesses, from aboriginal people to scientists, to medical doctors and researchers, to lawyers and labour groups, to health child specialists, experts on learning disabilities, environmental groups, enlightened industry representatives, who gave us a wonderful and rich set of recommendations to choose from when the committee wrote the review and put forward very clear and damning criticism when the legislation was before committee.

I want to thank all of these incredibly hard-working individuals who, with few resources but with much wisdom and foresight, provided the committee with the evidence to make this a better bill.

Even though some say we have failed because this bill is a mere shadow of what it could be, I say that we have succeeded in

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creating a benchmark against which all of us in the House will be measured. It is a legacy that some day we will return to.

Some say that politics is the art of the possible, but I say that the art of possible is doing the seemingly impossible.

**Mr. Roy Cullen (Etobicoke North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I congratulate my colleague for the hard work she and others have done in contributing to the debate on Bill C-32.

I suppose there are some of us in the House who have supported the bill. I would point out that in terms of an industrial barrage of lobbying, I know that I have seen in my time here lobbying that was much more intense, for example, the lobbying over the bank mergers, and yet our government decided to disallow bank mergers at this time.

• (1535)

We have lobbyists and we have lobbyists. I am sure there are lobbyists on the environmental protection side of the issue. Therefore, to say that this bill is the result of an intense industrial lobby is perhaps somewhat unfair.

In my experience in the forest products industry we had a number of concerns with legislation that was introduced by the Ontario government during the NDP period which concerned the use of the best available technology. What that legislation did was to say that, notwithstanding the cost, if there was technology in place that would allow the removal or elimination of certain pollutants, then the law required that the best available technology be implemented. For example, if emissions could be reduced by .000 and it cost \$1 billion, to use a ridiculous example, the legislation said that would have to be implemented.

I know there are differences of opinion on this issue in the House, but on the concept of virtual elimination I think there was a legitimate concern by industry that we were going to be chasing molecules or those pollutants that are not measurable by any reasonable standard and investing millions of dollars of capital to reduce pollutants which are really having no significant impact at all.

**Mrs. Karen Kraft Sloan:** Mr. Speaker, I agree with my colleague that \$1 billion to change technology to deal with an environmental issue is absurd. Certainly that is the kind of absurd sort of scaremongering that we were subjected to by the industrial lobby assault against this bill.

I would like to point out to my colleague that the issue of virtual elimination, the definition itself, as originally posed in Bill C-32, was so incomprehensible that it could have led to three different kinds of interpretation. Uncertainty for industry is a big issue. However, it was the deputy minister of Environment Canada who put forward an amendment through the government which

changed the definition at committee. The definition is exactly the same as it is in the toxic substance management policy. In 1995 stakeholder groups, including industry stakeholder groups, signed on to the toxic substance management policy, which has exactly the same definition as Bill C-32. They agreed with it. I have not seen industry pouring out of the country in the last five years.

My colleague says that we should not be chasing the last molecule, which is true. That is what it says in the toxic substance management policy. However, what industry lobbyists tend to forget is what happens on the second page of the toxic substance management policy, which is to say that the ultimate objective is to go toward virtual elimination without consideration for sociological and economic factors. That has often been missed.

[Translation]

**Mr. Jean-Guy Chrétien (Frontenac—Mégantic, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, Bill C-32 is undoubtedly a major bill, but it is very disappointing.

It is disappointing to Bloc Québécois members and to those Liberal members who are most involved in the environmental field. I can think of the hon. member for Davenport, who is also the chairman of the Standing Committee on the Environment and Sustainable Development, the hon. member for Lac-Saint-Louis and former Quebec environment minister, who also voted against the bill, and the hon. member for York North, who also sits on the committee.

If those Liberal members who are most involved in the environmental field voted against Bill C-32, as was the case yesterday, does it mean that all Liberal members who have some common sense should follow suit? These are members who have put a great deal of time into studying the bill clause by clause, and now they are voting against it.

[English]

**Mrs. Karen Kraft Sloan:** Mr. Speaker, indeed the member opposite sat through many hearings and was involved with the environment committee and part of the CEPA review. I know how much he cares about the environment because of the contribution he made.

• (1540)

He asked why there are members on this side of the House who have decided to vote against this legislation. This is a democracy. I am very proud of my government because I have the opportunity, as someone who has worked diligently on this file, who understands it and who knows the legislation inside and out, to say that this bill is not good enough. I have decided that in my own conscience, because of my own feelings and my own understandings. It is not good enough for the people of York North. It is not



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good enough for the people of Canada. This is a democracy and I have the right to express my opinion in the House.

**Mr. Peter Stoffer:** Mr. Speaker, I would ask that you seek unanimous consent to extend the question and comment period for another five minutes. This is such an important bill and such an important debate that we on this side of the House would like an additional couple of minutes to ask a few questions of the member for York North.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** The hon. member for Sackville—Musquodoboit Valley—Eastern Shore has requested the unanimous consent of the House to extend the period for questions and comments by five minutes. Is there unanimous consent?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

**Ms. Louise Hardy (Yukon, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Sackville—Musquodoboit Valley—Eastern Shore.

This legislation is a continuation of the Liberal agenda to deregulate. It is a total corporate agenda, a cave-in to a lobby group. In effect, what we have is a virtual environmental protection act. The term virtual has come to mean that it is not real.

We have heard all day that this bill is supposed to be balanced. We are trying to accommodate the economy as well as the environment. We have heard members of the Reform Party say that they are in favour of sustainable development, as well as Liberal members. In fact, they are having a love-in with the Reform Party in support of this environmental protection bill, which in fact is not going to protect our environment.

We are supposed to accept the virtual elimination of the most deadly poisons and toxins known to man, when what we need is the phase-out of persistent organic pollutants. These are heavy metals. They are DDTs. They are truly unmanageable poisons and that is why we do not want them in the environment. We cannot accept any level of these toxins because we cannot manage the effects of them. We cannot manage the effects of endocrine disrupters. How low will we allow sperm counts to go before we say no, we cannot accept this any more? How many mutated embryos will we accept before we say no, we have to stop the actual generation and sale of these poisons because we cannot manage them within our environment?

Newer research is clearly showing that we are affected by very low levels of toxins; not just megadoses of poisons that cause cancer, but very low doses of common poisons in our environment,

such as nitrates that we use as fertilizer and soaps that we use in cleaning.

The worst thing is that we do not know what the combination of these toxins will do to our children and to our health. We do know that it is not a benefit for us to have them within our environment. If we ignore the effects we will be propagating them by not going forward with environmental protection that is preventive and not crisis oriented, trying to clean up the mess at the other end.

When it comes to the north, the Arctic contaminants report has clearly stated that the north and the people of the north are disproportionately affected by these poisons because they stay there. They do not go anywhere else. We have lead, mercury and DDT levels that are unacceptable in mothers' breast milk.

The people who live in the north do not have the opportunity to go to a health food store to get organic produce. People who live in Old Crow, who want to buy some milk for their child, are looking at triple the cost which is paid by those living in a southern community. It is just not reasonable to expect these people, if they are concerned about their health and the levels of contaminants in their environment, not to live off the caribou and the fish which are coming more and more sparsely up the river to Old Crow. They have to depend on the country's food, the indigenous food, to bring up their children in good health.

• (1545)

It does not show concern for the northern people and the effects that these poisons have on them. They have no control over how or when those toxins arrive in the north because they come through the winds and evaporation.

We have a bill where the minister is going to limit her own powers to protect the environment. The minister's power will in fact be dissipated to the Minister of Industry. Maybe the Minister of Finance is not going to like how the minister wants to protect our environment. That minister will no longer have the ability to make a decision and say "No we cannot do this. This is unacceptable. The cost to human health is far too high". That is exactly what the bill does. It dissipates the power, the focus and the concentration on protecting our environment in the best interests of our public. The best interests of the health of these citizens have become subordinate to corporate interests.

I have heard this over and over again today from some of the members who have spoken and, I think, at great personal cost. It certainly must be heartbreaking to stand up and not vote with their party on a bill that they have worked on for years in the belief that as citizens they could protect our environment.

I will jump back to the north. The bill is not about good corporate citizens. It is about those individuals and those corporations who will not and do not clean up after themselves. They do

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not look ahead to the cost to the environment and to health through the process they use in their industry or the product that they produce in the end.

We have the DEW line, the distant early warning sites across the north that the U.S. was heavily involved in. It abandoned those sites leaving behind barrels of DDTs and other toxins. It sometimes buried them and sometimes left them exposed. What has happened to the sites? They have not been cleaned up. The Liberal government made an infamous deal to trade used military equipment for cleaning up the north, which means of course that those sites do not and will not get cleaned up.

Corporations have gone through the Faro mine one after the other. It will cost over \$100 million to clean up the toxins that were left behind. Who is responsible for that and who is going to end up cleaning it up? The people who live there or the government of the country will have to clean it up? As it stands, the mess is there.

We just had a \$300,000 fine for a company that left behind a mess. Guess what? That company is out of business. Who is going to clean that up? Who is going to live with the contamination? The indigenous people in that remote area who are going to have to live with the poison.

The Royal Oak mine in the Northwest Territories has gone out of business. It will cost over \$100 million to clean up the leaking arsenic in that area. Who is left with that? It is the Canadian citizens. Obviously with the company out of business it is not going to be cost effective to clean that up.

There is this whole idea that we will not clean up our environment or expect business to be responsible for what they have produced because it might not be cost effective. What is the definition of cost effective? How many lives will we abandon to sickness or death on the terms that it would be too costly to put in any kind of preventative measures on their behalf?

Last year I had the good fortune of listening to David Suzuki when he was on Parliament Hill. It was very impromptu. Members of parliament had the chance to listen to him. What he emphasized, and I suppose has emphasized throughout his career, is: that we somehow think our economy is independent from the earth that we live on; that we depend on the ozone layer for protection; that we depend on our sea for fish; that we depend on our lakes for fresh water; that we depend on the earth to grow our wheat; and that somehow we think that as a species we can live independently of our environment. This is something we cannot do. In order to have an economy we have to have an environment and we have to protect it.

This legislation does not protect the environment. It does not prevent the poisons that are being generated in great numbers by our society. I would suggest that this is pushed by greed and not by the concern for a quality of life on this planet that we truly can sustain for further generations.

I join my colleagues in sadly not supporting the environmental protection act because it does not do what it said it would do. It has become a virtual protection act.

• (1550)

**Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Musquodoboit Valley—Eastern Shore, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, as a former resident of Yukon for over nine years, I understand completely what the hon. member for Yukon has just been talking about.

In the aboriginal communities that she deals with on a regular day to day basis, can she not allay some personal concerns that they have addressed to her in regard to the Faro mines, the porcupine caribou herd and other instances of where we have abandoned those people when it comes to the environmental protection of the beautiful Yukon?

**Ms. Louise Hardy:** Mr. Speaker, at the end of February, I travelled with the caribou commons project, which is an environmental lobby to protect the calving grounds of the porcupine caribou herd. The people in the north depend on this caribou herd which has calved on a very small coastal plain just across the border in the United States.

What they have, in effect, is this sense of powerless to protect their way of life and the sustainability of their economy which is one that depends on the fish, the berries and the caribou both spiritually and physically.

If we look at what they could be facing in terms of cost effectiveness, someone might think that it would be a heck of a lot more profitable to have oil fields than to depend on caribou for a living. Under that logic, it would be perfectly acceptable to have roads through the habitat of the caribou, through their calving grounds and through their wintering grounds where North America has just one range left for the migrating herds. The north is then completely overlooked.

I would stress again that the effects of toxins are disproportionately dangerous for the people who live in the north as compared to the places where they are actually produced.

**Mrs. Karen Kraft Sloan (York North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, one of the concerns I have about the legislation is that Canada is currently heading up a process to negotiate protocol on persistent organic pollutants in international protocol. My concern is that some of the elements that parliament fixes in the legislation may find its way into that international process.

As someone who has been involved with some of the Inuit organizations in the north, I have had the opportunity to travel in the north and to meet with some of these people. I share a lot of their concerns around contaminants leaking their way into the north.

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What concerns does the member opposite have around persistent organic pollutants, how do some of the people in her riding deal with these issues and what would they like to see coming out of the international process?

**Ms. Louise Hardy:** Mr. Speaker, the effects of those pollutants are really insidious. They are hard to diagnose. When a person goes to the doctor, the doctor will not be able to say that the person is suffering from heavy metal poisoning because of persistent organic pollutants. It just does not happen. However, I happen to know there are very high rates of cancer, strange tumours, odd infections, people with chronic fatigue and environmental sensitivities.

What I think this legislation does is it sets a standard. How can we expect to go to an international arena and say that we have to phase out these pollutants when we have set a national standard that calls for virtual elimination, or that we will tolerate this much or three-quarters of this level in our environment rather than looking at them as something deadly which we cannot accept at all, period? We have to get them out of production and not allow them to affect our children.

By passing the legislation we set that standard. If we set it for ourselves, how can we hold an international arena to a higher standard?

• (1555)

**Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Musquodoboit Valley—Eastern Shore, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, this will be the last time I get to speak on behalf of my constituents of Sackville—Musquodoboit Valley—Eastern Shore on probably the most important piece of legislation facing us probably in the history of my career as a politician, being a new one in the House.

When the bill came out of committee it actually had some teeth to it. However, after the Liberals got a hold of it—with the exception of the members for Lac-Saint-Louis, Davenport and York North—they sat back, along with some of their colleagues in the Reform Party, and said that the bill was too strong and they could not have this. I find this absolutely disgusting.

It will not happen today or even tomorrow, but eventually down the road my children are going to ask me why our environment is more polluted than it was in 1999? I will tell them that it was because the government of the day, along with the official opposition, sat back and did absolutely nothing. They caved into industry standards and industry wishes and wants.

My children will one day ask me what I did to stop them. I will reply that I tried to do everything in the parliamentary atmosphere to raise the issue. The member for Churchill River, the member for Yukon, our leader from Halifax and the entire New Democratic Party, federally and provincially across the country from coast to coast, have been raising the issue of the environment for years.

I can guarantee members a \$1,000 Canadian that nobody on the backbench, with the exception of a few of them, ever read Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*, the environmental handbook. This was a woman with all the courage in the world who stood up to big polluters and big corporations in the early 1960s, when it was not popular to be green, and told the world what was happening to our natural environment.

Allow me to talk about a few things the government has been doing. We have had three consecutive environment committee reports critical of inaction and non-protection. This is a government that leaves sick children in their homes for over a year beside the Sydney tar ponds and Sysco site until the toxic goo shows up in their basements. The Liberals say they are moving these people, not because of health reasons but for compassionate reasons. It is absolutely unbelievable.

The Liberals do not have the courage to stand up and accept responsibility for major catastrophic failures when it comes to the environment. This is a government that chooses to leave over one million tonnes of radioactive waste leaking into Great Bear Lake in the Northwest Territories. This is a government that says it takes protecting Canada's freshwater resources seriously. Unbelievable.

Great Bear Lake is Canada's fourth largest supplier of freshwater. Rather than act, the government pays lip service to the community and promises and re-promises action. Still nothing has been done to contain or remedy the problem. The waste is on a federal government abandoned site.

This is a government that last night voted, with the exception of three Liberal members, against evidence presented by its own scientists that hormone disrupting substances have been found leaving pig farms and entering into waterways. No action was taken. The Liberals voted against this information. Whatever the Liberals do they do not want to upset the polluter. My God, we would certainly not want to upset the polluters who have destroyed our environment.

What happened to protecting Canadians? Why not place a warning that this is an occurring and recurring action? Why can we not tell Canadians the truth about what we are doing to our environment?

The NDP proposed a series of motions to follow the effort of the United States to provide a safer environment for their children. All we asked was to include consideration of the special susceptibility of children faced with environmental contaminants as a reference point when investigating substances.

If the members of the Liberal government or the Reform Party had a green bone in their body or morals beyond the lobby pockets, they could have acted proactively. The choice to defeat this proactive precautionary measure was made on the same day an article appeared in the Ottawa *Citizen* dealing with the growing concern of pesticide risk.

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To quote Julia Langer, toxicologist for World Wildlife Fund Canada:

—the regulatory process is deeply flawed. Pesticides are based on the average adult male's exposure and sensitivity to a product, a system that overlooks the vulnerability of children and women, and does not take into account a person's total exposure.

Our motion would have been to consider children when spending the millions of dollars on research, with specific considerations proposed in the United States and other countries. The Liberal government says it will spend millions of dollars on research. What will the government do with the information when it gets it?

The previous statement I gave mirrors the executive order signed by President William Jefferson Clinton in 1997, to direct government agencies to consider children's vulnerability and susceptibility in policy and regulatory considerations in 1997.

For the environment minister to stand before Canadians in the House, or on television, and state that Bill C-32 is the best environmental legislation in the world is a statement that needs to be clarified. It is really the best polluter protection legislation in the world.

• (1600)

On April 21, 1997 the President of the United States ordered by the authority vested in him as president by the constitution and the laws of the United States of America that a growing body of scientific knowledge demonstrated that children might suffer disproportionately from environmental health risks and safety risks. He said that these risks arose because children's neurological, immunological, digestive and other bodily systems were still developing; that children eat more food, drink more fluids and breathe more air in proportion to their body weight than adults; that children's size and weight might diminish their protection from standard safety features; and that children's behavioural patterns may make them more susceptible to accidents because they are less able to protect themselves.

Therefore, he said, that to the extent permitted by law and appropriate and consistent with the agency's mission, each federal agency should make it a high priority to identify and assess environmental health risks and safety risks that might disproportionately affect children and should ensure that its policies, programs, activities and standards addressed disproportionate risks to children which result from environmental a health risk or safety risk.

I received a postcard today from a friend of mine, Mr. Derek Jones of Newellton, Nova Scotia. His big concern is the effects of dragging and the technological gear that we use when it comes to fishing.

Off the east coast of Nova Scotia in Shelburne are some of the most beautiful coral reefs in the world. Some of those reefs are called the bubble gum coral, the bushy acanella and the black tip coral. They take hundreds of years to grow. In a few minutes a dragger will come buy and sweep these things away. There is absolutely nothing in the bill to protect those species with which we share the planet.

I plead with the government one last time. I have two young daughters, Jasmin Aurora who is 11 and Amber Ocean who is 8. My wife and I named those two children after the environment: Aurora for aurora borealis, the northern lights, and Amber Ocean because of the colour when the sunset goes down on the water. It turns it into an amber colour and we call her Amber Ocean. We believe firmly, strongly and lovingly in our environment, that the environment protects us. The environment is us. It is everything that we do.

For parliamentarians and legislators to fail in the protection of our children and other species with which we share the planet is an absolute disgrace. I ask every member of the House to vote with theirs hearts, with foresight and with conviction, not to vote with what the cabinet said or what some industry person said.

They should do the right thing for once in their lives and vote against the bill, send it back to the committee, allow the committee to revamp it the way it was when it came out of committee, and not allow any more amendments to the bill from the government side. All they did was water it down and weakened it. Instead of protecting our environment, in essence it protects the industry and the polluters of the country. It is an absolute disgrace.

The member for Churchill River and his assistant, Mr. Dave Campbell, have spent a tremendous amount of time working on this bill and its amendments. They have worked with various environmental groups, other agencies and industry to come up with solutions or a long term fix to our problems. Mr. Campbell worked tirelessly on this portfolio day after day, month after month. There is probably no one in the country who has worked harder on it than Mr. Campbell.

The hon. member for Churchill River knows exactly what I am talking about because Mr. Campbell works for him. They have formed a great team. On behalf of the New Democratic Party from coast to coast to coast I wish to publicly thank the member for Churchill River, the member for Lac-Saint-Louis, the member for York North, the member for Davenport, and the other members who assisted in getting the bill out of committee as it was.

Unfortunately the government got its hands on the bill afterward. It changed it and made it much weaker. The bill does nothing to protect the livelihood of aboriginal people, children, farmers, fishermen, and other people who use our resources on a day to day basis. That is most unfortunate.

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If we do not learn from history, we will reap what we sow and we will rue the day we made this decision. Again I ask the Liberals to have a free vote, vote with their consciences, do what is right and think of their children. In the words of my aboriginal friends from the Mi'kmaq nation of Nova Scotia, let us think in seven generation principles, think of our great, great-grandchildren before we vote today.

• (1605)

**Mr. Roy Cullen (Etobicoke North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I know the member for Sackville—Musquodoboit Valley—Eastern Shore speaks very earnestly about the environment. We all care about the environment. I for one am concerned about air quality in Toronto where I live. I also know the member opposite is a very practical person because I have had the pleasure of participating with him in extracurricular activities outside the House.

I have a hypothetical question for him. Let us say that the hon. member is chairman of a company. His chief executive officer or president makes a presentation to the board of directors on a project which, after all the analyses, will cost \$600 million and involve 1,000 jobs.

As chairman he would go over all the analyses and ask about the toxic chemicals being produced, whether they are satisfied with the level of toxicity and whether they have done all they can to ensure a clean environment in the factory site. Then the president would answer that they are down to .0001, that they have the best available processes in place, and that they are following all the rules.

What if someone came up with a new measuring device which found something in there that was .000005? Could they shut them down? Could they stop them from operating? Could they force them to find the solution when the solution may not be there? How would the member feel if he could not be given that assurance? What would you say then?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** I remind all members to address each other through the Chair.

**Mr. Peter Stoffer:** Mr. Speaker, I assure the hon. member that if I were chairman of the board of a major industrial company the first objective of my company would be environmental protection at all cost.

Then, working in concert with the municipal, provincial and federal governments, I would ascertain the most environmentally friendly sustainable way not only of maintaining the environment in a sustainable manner but working with labour groups and all other groups to make sure we do not harm the environment in any way, shape or form. That is the seven generation principle, and that is what we should be doing.

He should know that instead of eradicating pollutants the bill will allow the government to set the level of pollutants. It gives extraordinary powers to the environment minister, he or she. We know this one may not be around long after the next shuffle. The government may set a level which does not meet any scientific or biological long term evidence to protect our planet.

If I were chairman of the board I would be working in concert with all stakeholders to protect our environment, jobs and the sustainable environment at all cost.

**Ms. Paddy Torsney (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of the Environment, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we certainly heard a lot of rhetoric from the member opposite. That is a very gentle way to describe it.

Is he aware that the bill explicitly recognizes the right of aboriginal governments to participate directly in advising the minister on the operation and implementation of the act? Does he recognize that this bill, unlike any other bill or anything we do, obligates the minister to conduct science on emerging issues like gender benders or endocrine disrupters?

Is he aware that the government provided money toward remediation for the community action group in Sydney to clean up the tar ponds, almost \$40 million after lots of investment in terms of science?

The bill is predicated on the principle of pollution prevention so we never have to get into these circumstances. How could the member opposite say that he would vote against implementing and operationalizing pollution prevention? How could he stand here today and say he will do that?

**Mr. Peter Stoffer:** Mr. Speaker, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment has a way of leading a question with her chin. Why did she override the amendments of the members for Lac-Saint-Louis, Davenport and York North which would have made the bill stronger? Why did you do that? Did you do it because of what you cared for or did—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** Don't forget me.

**Mr. Peter Stoffer:** Mr. Speaker, why did she override those three valuable members of the committee?

• (1610)

The aboriginal group is strictly an advisory group. The minister can still chose to ignore its advice. Also the bill completely ignores the Metis people.

The federal and provincial governments spent \$62 million to help the affected people out of Frederick Street, but there is no long term commitment and no resources to clean up the tar ponds and all that area, once and for all. None whatsoever.

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The bill out of the committee has been weakened and the parliamentary secretary knows it. She cannot deny that because it is a fact.

**Mrs. Karen Redman (Kitchener Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to say a few words about Bill C-32, the legislation to renew the Canadian Environmental Protection Act or CEPA as it is commonly known.

I will focus my remarks on the critical issue of enforcement of the law. Effective enforcement of our environmental laws is something that Canadians have a right to expect. It has been a matter of interest to many members of the House and of the Standing Committee on the Environment and Sustainable Development.

Bill C-32 represents a significant step forward because of the new enforcement tools it will provide. This will translate into improved enforcement and better protection of our environment and our health. CEPA is the cornerstone of federal environmental protection legislation. It allows the government to set tough but fair standards for the benefit of all Canadians to protect our environment and our health.

Through its regulations CEPA sets rules that must be obeyed. The enforcement provisions of Bill C-32 will provide the powers to ensure these rules are indeed obeyed. It provides authority to conduct inspections that are the backbone of our enforcement efforts.

Inspections serve several functions. First, they help to create an enforcement presence, evidence of the government's commitment to ensuring compliance by regulatees. Second, they can identify specific environmental problems. Third, they serve to identify non-compliance for further investigation.

Bill C-32 expands investigative powers in CEPA to make sure that our enforcement officers can enter and inspect any place where there might logically be substances or activities regulated under CEPA. Enforcement officers will now be able to seek inspection warrants from the courts when they are refused entry at a commercial site or when they arrive and find that the premises are locked or abandoned.

Another significant improvement in the bill is the changes that will provide peace officer status to CEPA enforcement officers. These new powers will greatly improve their ability to detect environmental crimes. It means, among other things, that CEPA enforcement officers will be able to seek warrants to conduct video surveillance or intercept private communications.

Other peace officer powers, such as the authority to serve court summonses, issue notices to appear in court and seek search warrants by telephone, will allow enforcement officers to do their

job more quickly and efficiently, especially when they are ensuring compliance in remote areas.

Bill C-32 not only introduces innovations during the inspection and investigation phase. It also introduces changes for dealing with situations where CEPA has been violated. Once there has been a violation of an environmental protection law, our goal is to return the violator to compliance as quickly as possible, without further recurrence of the violation.

Traditionally we have relied on criminal courts to order violators into compliance once they have been convicted of an offence. Current thinking has led governments in Canada and elsewhere to supplement this process with other statutory tools designed to ensure compliance without burdening the courts with lengthy trials.

Two of the most important additions to CEPA in this area are environmental protection compliance orders and environmental protection alternative measures. Environmental protection compliance orders work like injunctions. They allow an enforcement officer to order a person to stop violating the law or to follow the requirements of the law where the enforcement officer has reasonable grounds to believe that there is a violation.

In keeping with the principles of justice, there are limitations to the use of this power by an inspector. The steps laid out in the order must be reasonable. They must be consistent with protection of the environment and public safety.

• (1615)

The maximum period that a compliance order can be in effect is 180 days. Nevertheless, environmental protection compliance orders are very powerful tools. To ensure that they are used fairly, a person who is the subject of an order can appeal the order by asking for a review of that order by an independent review officer.

The other major new type of enforcement tool is the environmental protection alternative measures, or EPAMs. Alternative measures are not new in Canadian law. They already are present in the Criminal Code as well as the Young Offenders Act.

Environmental protection alternative measures are essentially negotiated settlements to criminal charges. They are negotiated between the accused and the Attorney General of Canada. Bill C-32 sets out strict conditions surrounding the negotiation of such alternative measures including that the measures can only be negotiated after charges are laid in the court. The accused therefore knows that the government has thoroughly investigated the violation and has evidence to support these charges.

Negotiation of EPAMs is voluntary, both for the attorney general and the accused. The attorney general can choose not to offer negotiated EPAMs after taking into account the seriousness of the violation, damage to the environment and efforts made to correct

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the damage, the compliance history of the accused with CEPA and so on.

As well the accused must freely consent to negotiate an EPAM after being advised of their right to be represented by legal counsel. They must also accept the responsibility for their offence.

EPAMs are not backroom deals. They are negotiated after the charges are made public and the agreements themselves are filed in the court and they too are public documents. If the accused does not live up to the terms of the EPAM, the original charges can be reactivated. On the other hand, if the terms of the EPAM are fulfilled and the accused is again in compliance with the law, the charges can be suspended or withdrawn entirely. There is no recorded conviction; there is no criminal record and there is compliance.

Bill C-32 also provides new guidance for the courts when sentencing convicted offenders. The bill includes sentencing criteria that take into account such things as the cost to remedy the damage done to the environment. The maximum under CEPA continues to be a fine of \$1 million a day or up to five years imprisonment. A court can also levy a fine equal to any profits earned as a result of the offence.

Bill C-32 takes an innovative and progressive approach toward enforcement. It greatly extends the powers of enforcement officers so they can ensure compliance with the law. Overall, Bill C-32 strengthens CEPA so that we will be able to better protect both the environment and the health of Canadians.

**Mr. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for her fine speech. I have a number of questions for her.

Much of this comes from the work by the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development who excoriated the government in many ways on its failure to co-ordinate interdepartmental activities on the issue of sustainable environmental management and on the issue of developing a common policy and a hearing for those policies. The indictment was quite scathing. It went all the way from a lack of interdepartmental co-ordination to a lack of agreement. In fact the commissioner said that the single greatest impediment to fulfilling and living up to our agreements within our country is interdepartmental warring, a lack of co-ordination between departments on a horizontal level and within a department on a vertical level.

I would like to ask my hon. colleague what does her government plan on doing to rectify this very important problem that we have within the government today?

**Mrs. Karen Redman:** Mr. Speaker, the position the member refers to was actually established by the government. Many of the

recommendations have been implemented in this bill. It is something that the government will continue to take seriously as it moves toward protecting the environment.

• (1620 )

**Mr. Rick Laliberte (Churchill River, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, in the vote last night, one of the amendments took away the statement of phasing out toxic substances in the preamble. The issue of phase-out was a major commitment made by the Liberals in the election campaign. In the fading red book the only thing that stood out was this environmental promise. Since this promise has been broken and only three of the Liberals stood up to oppose CEPA, maybe the member could comment on why the phase-out of the deadliest toxins in the world is not in effect in this country.

**Mrs. Karen Redman:** Mr. Speaker, I would just underscore the hon. member's comment that it was in the preamble and not actually part of the bill. The bill says we will virtually eliminate all detectable levels of the specific toxins. That is virtual elimination. I would go back to my comments about the strict enforcement of the CEPA bill itself and the fact that it will lead to better environment control and better protection for Canadians.

**Mr. Roy Cullen (Etobicoke North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the member for Kitchener Centre for her interest in and commitment to this particular topic.

In her remarks the member talked about the issue of enforcement and implementation. There are roles here for the federal government obviously in the context of federal statutes and laws, but also for the provincial governments and the ministers of environment, particularly in Ontario. We have heard a lot of discussion and debate about the lack of commitment by the Ontario government in its cutbacks to the environment. With respect, we have had to do some cutting back in our own federal Department of the Environment.

I wonder if the member could comment on how well we are positioned in Ontario and in Canada to enforce the laws and regulations that we do promulgate.

**Mrs. Karen Redman:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question and acknowledge that when we have a joint responsibility such as enforcement, this is something on which we will move with the provinces. We have to have their buy in to it as well.

**Mr. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the government has over 64,000 buildings, over 25,000 vehicles and disposes of over 90,000 tonnes of waste every single year. It was also stated that the government could save over \$300 million over 30 years if it was able to adhere to the principles of sustainable environmental consumption that it agreed to but is not fulfilling.

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How is the hon. member's government going to ensure that the federal government and the ministries themselves adhere to sound environmental principles and save \$300 million and a lot of waste?

**Mrs. Karen Redman:** Mr. Speaker, I would point out that CEPA actually is an attempt by the government to put its house in order as well as to bring into alignment the environmental issues it deals with.

I thank the hon. member for his concern. I wish he and his party would bring these concerns to question period and ask the minister herself these very important questions.

**Ms. Paddy Torsney (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of the Environment, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to stand today to talk about Bill C-32, an act respecting pollution prevention and the protection of the environment and human health in order to contribute to sustainable development.

Before I begin my formal comments I would like to thank the very many officials who have dedicated their energy, time and enthusiasm to this process. Without them we would not be here today voting on this bill. The minister and her staff and my own staff have made sure that this process has gone smoothly and that we have the best bill possible to vote on tonight.

During the last 11 months Bill C-32 has been debated by all sides in the House. After thoughtful consideration and often lively debate both in committee and in this chamber, Bill C-32 I believe gives Canadians environmental legislation that protects the health of Canadians today and for the future.

Some seven federal departments are touched by this bill: environment, health, agriculture and agri-food, fisheries and oceans, natural resources, industry, and intergovernmental affairs.

• (1625)

Canadians need and deserve legislation that deals with the challenges of today and prepares for the challenges of the future.

In the clause by clause process we spent some 93 hours, a Canadian record, examining the clauses of this bill. We considered some 560 different amendments, some of which overlapped and 157 of which were passed. The government proposed 90 amendments. It supported 60 amendments from members on all sides. As the member for Anjou—Rivière-des-Prairies said "Let us look at this bill and see how it is an improvement on the current legislation and something that all of us as Canadians can build upon".

Bill C-32 is founded on the concept that preventing pollution is better both for the environment and for the economy than trying to clean up after the damage has been done.

CEPA, the current legislation that is enacted in Canada, came into place in 1988. Our thinking about the environment has evolved since then. Science and technology have evolved since then. Environmental law has advanced. Concepts like sustainable development and pollution prevention have become widely accepted. The environmental challenges are increasing rather than decreasing.

Bill C-32 is a significant and positive step in renewing the current legislation. It is on the leading edge of environmental protection legislation worldwide.

Contrary to their dire predictions and doomsday scenarios, at the end of the day this bill will ensure that industries in Canada will be more competitive and their employees will live in a healthier environment. After years of debate, a clear framework will exist once this bill is passed. Canadian businesses will meet the challenges. There are environmental businesses in my riding that depend on strong regulatory frameworks. That is what this bill will ensure.

The bill establishes a clear framework for managing toxic substances. It operationalizes pollution prevention, especially after amendments were requested by the environmental lobbyists who appeared before the committee. It ensures cleaner air and water. It deals with fuels, engine emissions, sources of international air and water pollution. It establishes a clear regime for environmental matters related to emergencies. It deals with emerging biotechnology issues guarding against the adverse effects of biotechnology. It deals with federal government lands and operations and aboriginal lands. It introduces strict enforcement regimes and new peace officer status and powers for stricter enforcement. It encourages public participation. There is a new environmental register that is fully accessible on the Internet. These are good things. It will lead to good change in our country.

One of the most important things is getting the worst toxic substances out of our environment. This bill establishes a more efficient process to identify, screen, assess and manage toxic substances. It virtually eliminates the most dangerous of those toxic substances. It puts in a fixed timeframe to put in place controls and obligates the Minister of the Environment and this government to do research on emerging issues like gender bending or hormone disrupting substances.

Might I remind all members that we have encouraged and left in place the amendments the committee brought forward, contrary to what members of the House are saying. That the amendments last night somehow brought the bill back to before the committee process I say is hogwash. This bill is a good bill. It was improved in the process and we have maintained that.

The new authority will improve control of pollutants and waste. It will monitor motor vehicles and other engine emissions to develop a new national emissions mark for engines meeting emission requirements. It will provide a national fuels mark to



show that fuels meet environmental standards. It will provide better protection of the marine environment from land based sources of pollution and will increase the power to control the transboundary movement of hazardous waste and hazardous recyclables. It will provide the power to control the import and export of non-hazardous waste and the authority to require reduction plans from exporters.

There is an increased role for aboriginal peoples. It improves the opportunities for public involvement. There is comprehensive whistleblower protection provisions that will encourage more Canadians to report CEPA violations.

I would now like to talk a bit about virtual elimination. Virtual elimination means reducing releases to the environment of a small number of the most dangerous toxic substances to levels where these releases cannot be measured. It relates to the most toxic substances. It is a leading edge process and it puts in place Canada's toxic substances management policy.

• (1630 )

Extremely small releases of certain substances to the environment create problems that are extremely costly or impossible to correct. It is particularly true for substances that are toxic as defined under CEPA and are primarily the result of human activity. They are persistent, meaning that they take a long time if ever to break down and they bioaccumulate. They collect in living organisms and end up in the food chain.

Let us talk about DDT, an insecticide introduced in the 1940s into Canada. It was responsible for causing drastic reductions in many bird populations, especially those in the higher levels of the food chain. We banned DDT in 1970 in Canada and still it is being detected in the breast milk of people in our northern regions. It is still causing havoc for the birds and the bald eagles which like to nest in the Great Lakes area.

We cannot always accurately predict at precisely what level these very dangerous substances pose a significant risk, but we have put in place the precautionary principle. We base the decisions on science but we do not require full scientific certainty. That is what the legislation ensures.

The virtual elimination provisions of Bill C-32 are entirely consistent with the government's toxic substances management policy in 1995.

Let us talk about gender benders or hormone disrupting substances. Some chemicals disrupt the hormones in our bodies. Some of them have a long term effect and some of them have a short term effect. Beer would have a short term effect. Other things might have a longer term effect.

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We are doing research. We are making sure our researchers are doing the best job. They are part of international panels. They are doing the research in my riding of Burlington. They will better understand this emerging threat and other threats that we do not even know about. They will evaluate toxics against this new emerging information. They will protect the health of Canadians and the environment.

Unlike the existing CEPA, Bill C-32 places strict deadlines on the government to act to protect the environment and human health. The bill is consistent with the government's commitment to sustainable development when making decisions. The new CEPA requires consideration of environment and health effects. Unlike the existing laws, CEPA provides several opportunities for consultation and to develop more effective measures to protect the environment.

When members stand in the House tonight, they can stand and vote for the bill with confidence because it gives the government new tools and powers. The bill is about pollution prevention. The bill has public input and as a final bill it protects human health. It focuses on pollution prevention and it introduces and ensures a strict toxic management regime.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Jean-Guy Chrétien (Frontenac—Mégantic, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, it is very uplifting to hear from a member of the Liberal government. They love to spout fine rhetoric such as "This is groundbreaking legislation. This bill includes the most effective processes. It is the best environmental legislation in the world".

Yesterday, when we voted at report stage, the most involved members of the Liberal caucus, who sit on the Standing Committee on the Environment and Sustainable Development, including the chairman himself, the hon. member for Davenport, who was Minister of the Environment in the Turner cabinet, voted against the bill.

The hon. member for Lac-Saint-Louis, a former Quebec environment minister under Robert Bourassa in the 1970s, voted against the bill. He also sits on the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development.

The hon. member for York North, in Ontario, who is an environmentalist and a member of the same committee, voted against the bill.

The parliamentary secretary does not have the courage to admit that this bill was killed by the Minister of Industry himself and the various ministers who gravitate around him.

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• (1635)

Everything is a power struggle in that party. The bill, which was originally acceptable, has been watered down to the point where it does not even have 1% of true quality left.

This is why Bloc Quebecois members and many others will vote against it. The squandering of public money and duplication that will result from this legislation are the reasons why my colleague, the hon. member for Jonquière, recommended that we vote against Bill C-32.

[*English*]

**Ms. Paddy Torsney:** Mr. Speaker, that was an interesting preamble and an interesting question. I think somewhere I was called unthoughtful but I am not sure. I will try to ignore that part.

Clearly this is yet again the Bloc's interpretation of federal and provincial responsibilities. The bill is not about duplication. The bill acknowledges that the federal and provincial governments have some responsibilities. In some cases they overlap. We are working to have a seamless across the country of laws which will create, ensure and improve the environment and the human health of Canadians. I urge the hon. member to support it.

The supreme court said that the protection of the environment was an international problem that required action by governments at all levels. The legitimate use of the criminal law in—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** The hon. member for Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca.

**Mr. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the parliamentary secretary. There are over 23,000 substances in the country today. Many were found acceptable prior to the 1960s when our ability to analyse their effects on human health were less than they are today. What does the parliamentary secretary feel about that?

The departments have made commitments to engage in sustainable environmental actions but only 11% of those actions are being fulfilled. What will the government do to ensure that governments live up to the commitments they said they would live up to?

**Ms. Paddy Torsney:** Mr. Speaker, Bill C-32 places some strict timelines on the evaluation of the 23,000 substances in existence in Canada. It ensures they are evaluated against the potential health and environment risks.

With regard to general government policy, the member should know that the last two budgets included some \$40 million for this evaluation. We recently announced a project the other day. I am glad the member will be heralding that in news releases in his riding. It ensures the government is doing research on some of these very important substances. Health Canada, Environment

Canada, and Fisheries and Oceans Canada are involved because we all know this environment is the only environment we have. We must protect the environment and the human health of Canadians.

**Mr. Rick Laliberte (Churchill River, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, would like the parliamentary secretary acknowledge that the bill requires additional responsibilities of the minister and of the environment department? Are there additional resources for enforcement?

An additional listing of money was included in the last budget, but the standing committee was asking for enforcement. The standing committee has been tossed around by the—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member but his time is up.

**Ms. Paddy Torsney:** Mr. Speaker, one of the many good things that could be said about the government is that when a need has been identified we have made the resources available.

The committee recommended enhanced powers. They are in the bill, so I urge him to stand tonight and vote for stricter enforcement, for giving peace officer status to enforcement officers to make sure they can continue to protect the environment for all Canadians.

[*Translation*]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Sackville—Musquodoboit Valley—Eastern Shore, fisheries; the hon. member for Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, Correctional Service Canada; the hon. member for Waterloo—Wellington, the environment; the hon. member for Toronto Centre—Rosedale, trade; the hon. member for Churchill River, Canadian Environmental Protection Act.

• (1640)

[*English*]

**Mr. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to speak to Bill C-32. After what I have heard today I must say the government is falling far short of the commitments it has made. I bring to the attention of the House numerous studies on the abysmal activities of the government on the environment.

Unfortunately I only have 10 minutes so I will get to the heart of the matter. The Department of the Environment has been an utter failure in the enforcement, monitoring and control of the environmental policies it has enacted. I will divide the environment into two sections: domestic and international.

The Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development put forth a very concise and specific report with specific solutions on how to revamp and improve the environment within our country and our activities abroad. After all, as we know, the environment is transboundary. It affects not only ourselves but other countries in the world.

In the first part, managing toxic substances, over 23,000 substances have been approved. Many of them were approved before 1960, which means we really do not know the effects of these substances on human health. We need to re-examine that.

One of the greatest obstacles toward a sustainable environmental program is the lack of co-ordination between departments and within departments. Turf wars, lack of co-ordination, lack of common vision, lack of agreement and lack of a dispute resolution mechanism on agreements have ensured that the agreements reached are unenforceable, are not being listened to, and are simply in many cases not worth the paper they are written on.

That is an issue of public service, public management and the failure of management in many of the ministries today. There is the lack of monitoring and the unfulfilled commitments. Commitments are made but not adhered to.

How can we have a sustainable environmental policy when the government's own departments are simply not listening to what they have been told to adhere to? Furthermore, no one is monitoring them and no one is saying that if two departments are not agreeing on something an independent dispute mechanism will be put in place to ensure that they do. If that were to happen it would go a long way to fulfilling the commitments we have made on the environment.

There is no common vision and there is a lack of consensus among departments. The commissioner said that the single greatest impediment to a sustainable environmental policy was the lack of departmental co-ordination which exists today.

On the issue of federal-provincial agreements there is no ongoing analysis of whether the federal and provincial governments are actually fulfilling the commitments they have made. No one is watching them. There are no dispute resolution mechanisms among provinces or between the federal government and the provinces.

Commitments are made and no concrete action is taken. Only 11% of the commitments made by departments have been fulfilled. Some 89% have not been fulfilled. There is a lack of co-ordination among departments and inadequate review is endemic.

We need to turn talk into action. The federal government has 64,000 buildings, 25,000 vehicles, and disposes of 95,000 tonnes of waste every year. The commissioner said that if the government were to adhere to the principles that have been put forth it would

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save taxpayers some \$300 million over the next 30 years, not to mention making our streets, our air and our land a lot safer for everyone.

We do not need to reinvent the wheel. We can look at what is happening in other countries. In the Netherlands and Denmark the agricultural sector has done an outstanding job of putting together concise environmental plans. The World Bank is starting to do it. South Africa has done an outstanding job with respect to its endangered species legislation and in terms of garnering, improving and expanding habitat.

• (1645 )

With the consent of the House I will be sharing my time with the member for Elk Island.

Internationally we have to look at what will happen in the future. There is an increasing population growth rate. Currently our world population is 6 billion people. In the middle of the next century the world population will hit 11 billion. How will we make sure that we have an environment that is liveable with a population of 11 billion? People will strive for an improved standard of living.

The largest democracy in the world, India, has an incredibly expanding middle class that will number over 300 million people in the next century. Approximately 300 million people, 10 times the population of Canada, will be demanding the same standard of living as we have. That will put an extraordinary demand upon not only renewable, but also non-renewable resources. If we do not institute sustainable environmental policies and adhere to those policies we will have a degraded environment in which it will simply not be worth living.

Some, such as Tad Homer Dixon from the University of Toronto Institute of Conflict Studies, have claimed that the diminishing of non-renewable resources will result in conflict. We can see as an example the water situation in the Middle East and how this is an issue on which wars may be fought. It is something that we need to look at and, indeed, the countries in the area need to look at very carefully.

On the issue of endangered species the government's behaviour is abysmal. This issue affects not only the federal government, but also the provinces. Because of the balkanization of our country, how things have been divided between the federal government and the provinces, there is an enormous amount of overlap between those two levels of government, as well as the municipalities, and endangered species are not being protected.

The federal government's great tome to endangered species is to protect less than 5% of the land in this country. That is nothing. Species rely upon land to survive. The degradation of land, damage

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to the environment and the shrinkage of their habitat are the greatest threats to these species.

I know there are members across the way who feel very passionately about this. The federal government clearly needs to work with the provinces in developing a strategy that will involve a much larger area of land over which the federal government or the provinces, one or the other, will have distinct control so that laws can be applied, people will adhere to them and the laws will be enforced.

There are two topics I would like to broach. One is co-ordination between government and the private sector. Not enough has been done about that. Again I bring up the subject of South Africa. The people of the province of KwaZulu/Natal have done an outstanding job of marrying the needs of the private sector and the public sector. Co-operation between the private and the public sectors has led to a huge increase in habitat and has greatly improved the safety of the flora and fauna. It is the last repository for large mammals in that area of the world. If it was not for what has been done in that province, many of these mammals would have been extinct a long time ago, as well as much of the flora.

I ask the government to look at the innovative ways in which South Africa has engaged in public-private partnerships and conservancies and how the parks and habitat have been used to benefit the people in the surrounding area. This has done a great deal for the sustainable environment program, which has benefited people as well as the flora and fauna and the environment.

The government needs to turn talk into action. It needs to implement the strategies. It needs to monitor the strategies. It needs to establish clear targets. It needs to develop interdepartmental co-ordination, not the hodge-podge situation we have now, with the infighting which is making the environmental policy of the government a pox on its house.

• (1650)

**Mr. Brent St. Denis (Algoma—Manitoulin, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest to the member's speech and particularly to the part where he talked about a project in South Africa, which I think is an excellent example of public and private partnership.

Yesterday evening I had a chance to attend the state dinner hosted by the Prime Minister for the President of Colombia. I happened to be sitting beside a gentleman and his wife who live in Bogota and own a small coffee plantation. These individuals are from a well established family. The gentleman was telling me that the U.S. based Smithsonian Institution is prepared to certify plantations such as his because he is willing to invest money in his plantation to assist with the migratory bird problem, a problem resulting unfortunately from deforestation in the tropical areas of South America.

In line with the member's comments, I thought it was an excellent example of economy and ecology working together to

provide a better situation, not only for our animal life but for human beings as well.

The certification of his plantation by the Smithsonian Institution will allow this individual to sell coffee at a higher price because it will be certified by the institution. Resources will then be available for this man to invest in his plantation to improve the trees and the husbandry of the plants for the benefit of the migratory birds who need that type of forest cover.

I am wondering if the member could comment further on that type of partnership. Does the member believe that Bill C-32 will not allow that kind of thing? I believe it will.

**Mr. Keith Martin:** Mr. Speaker, in my view Bill C-32 misses the mark completely. Sustainable environmental management are pretty words but they lack substance. What the World Wildlife Fund did in Belize, Central America, and what was done in KwaZulu/Natal are models of sustainable environmental management. Unfortunately we have not adopted this in our country. We have not embraced the concept, nor have we, in my view, engaged companies in the private sector to make them understand the benefits on their bottom line of having stable socioeconomic conditions and a stable environment. If that stabilization takes place, it will translate into more money on their bottom line.

I would be happy to speak to the member at length, but I draw his attention to those examples because they have saved dozens of species of flora and fauna and indeed have improved the health and welfare of the people, which has resulted in greater profits for the companies working in those areas.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Jocelyne Girard-Bujold (Jonquière, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member of the Reform Party for having shared with us his view on what environmental legislation properly administered by a department that assumes its responsibilities for co-ordination and takes steps to protect endangered species and eliminate toxic substances ought to be like.

Reform members have indicated that such objectives could never be met by the bill and by the environment department. I would like the hon. Reform member to tell my why he and his party would vote for Bill C-32 when it is the total opposite of what he is calling for.

**Mr. Keith Martin:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for her question.

[*English*]

We are supporting this bill because something is better than nothing. We are putting forth constructive leadership solutions that the government can take if it chooses, which exist not only within our country, within our own departments, but also internationally.

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These measures could dramatically improve the environmental programs which I hope the government would like to pursue.

• (1655)

There is so much more that we could do on the environment that we are not doing. Again, pragmatic solutions exist. They are found in South Africa, Central America, Europe, Denmark and the Netherlands.

The World Bank is starting to institute some fine programs. Indeed, the World Bank is engaging in a very innovative program of marrying the private sector with the public sector. It has taken as an example what UNICEF has done in Botswana, which has taken a leadership role on this issue. I encourage the government to look at what Dr. Steve Simon, the UNICEF representative in Botswana, has done on this issue. It has been really innovative.

**Mr. Ken Epp (Elk Island, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, it is a delight to be able to rise to speak to a matter which is of the greatest importance to all of us.

I am sure that every member here, especially all those myriads of Liberals on the other side, represented mostly by their green suits today, would definitely agree that we want to protect the environment. We want to protect the people of our country from being poisoned. That really is what environmental protection is about. I do not think there is anybody in the House who would disagree with that basic fundamental principle.

If I may be so bold, Mr. Speaker, I would like to open my favourite magazine to the centrefold. It happens to be the blue book of the Reform Party. Right in the centre is our policy on pollution and the environment. I would encourage people to get a copy of this book.

I am holding it so the camera does not pick it up. It is not being used as a prop. It is not even as bad as a flag.

I would encourage people to pick this up because there is much misinformation about Reform's commitment to the preservation of the environment. The reason is that some people keep perpetrating the myth of what they think they would like to criticize us for, instead of looking at the facts. The facts are, what are the policies and principles—

**Mr. Brent St. Denis:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I do not wish to interrupt the hon. member, but he has made reference to the Reform Party's blue book. I wonder when he is finished using it for his speech if he would be so kind as to table it so that all hon. members could—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** That is not a point of order, but I am sure the hon. member for Elk Island will find it very hard not to comply with the invitation.

**Mr. Ken Epp:** Mr. Speaker, I am quite willing to table 301 copies with the clerk. We do not need 301 because 59 of us already have them. Certainly they are available. They are in the public domain.

Some may want to have it quicker than that. Maybe there is somebody right now in the wonderful provinces of Alberta or Saskatchewan listening to this speech, saying "I sure wonder what the Reformers say about the environment". Get on the old Internet and go to [www.reform.ca](http://www.reform.ca) and there it is. Our blue book is right on our web page and anybody in the country can look.

I want to point out that there are some very important principles that are given here. I will read a few of them because I will not have time in my limited time to read the whole section. It is a wonderful centrefold. It states:

The Reform Party supports the principle of establishing and regularly reviewing standards that are based on sound science and which are technologically and socio-economically viable.

That is the only responsible statement that can be made on the environment. People can become extremists on one side of the story or on the other, saying on the one side that we do not care about the environment, or that we will not allow anything on the other side. There has to be some reasonable middle ground. We need to balance all of these various factors.

I have been listening all day to the debate and it has been very interesting, especially because of the different points of view that have been presented. While I was listening to these speeches today I wondered what we would really have to do to make our planet totally pristine again.

• (1700)

We would definitely have to stop using vehicles which pump an awful lot of pollution into the environment. It is now generally known that I am now six-tenths of a century old, but in my short lifetime I have noticed how much we have decreased the amount of pollution per vehicle.

We had a car when I was just a young man with a family. I will not mention the make because it is not nice to pick on any particular make or model. However, it regularly delivered 15 miles per gallon. I did a little calculation. Every time I drove that vehicle 100 kilometres, although we did not measure distance in kilometres in those years, I would use 18.8 litres of fuel with the corresponding amount of pollution that came from them. This was at a time when we were bringing in non-leaded fuel.

I have purchased one or two or three cars over the last 34 years. The big car we have now uses exactly half as much fuel. The old one got 15 miles per gallon; this one gets 30. It is still a reasonably big car suitable for four or five people. It uses 9.4 litres every 100 kilometres.

*Government Orders*

I am going to use the name of my little runabout because it is a wonderful little car. I will do some advertising for them. My little Mazda 323 gets about 45 miles per gallon. That is 6.3 litres every 100 kilometres. We are down to approximately one-third as much pollution for every 100 kilometres driven. That came about without any government regulation and without any inspectors. There are hundreds of vehicles like mine that are now being driven on the streets of our country.

My proudest moment is when I hop on my little Honda 125. It has a nice little 4 cycle engine. It is totally clean burning. It is difficult to believe, but I get 100 miles per gallon with it. That works out to around 3 litres every 100 kilometres. When I am going somewhere all by myself I use that bike or my slightly larger bike which is just a little less economical in fuel. I feel so good when I do that because I am not polluting the atmosphere.

I feel that it is a personal responsibility to do whatever we can individually. I agree with legislation like Bill C-32 which says we should have regulations to prevent those who would blatantly break the law. There are some. I have met them myself as have all other members, I am sure.

I have heard speeches today by people whom I have seen just outside the doors here huffing and puffing on a cigarette. It is incredible. It is the greatest concentration of air pollution. Those burning leaves are approximately 20 centimetres from the nose and mouth. The smoke is being sucked in instead of blown out. It is absolutely absurd. Yet they are here talking about pollution, Bill C-32 and regulating the environment. Let us get real.

I feel very good when I use my little vehicles and I do not pollute the air. That is a personal responsibility. Just as with cigarette smoking we ought to improve education in that regard.

In our school rooms across the country more and more attention is being paid to educating and informing our young people not only about the evils of smoking and that form of pollution but all different kinds of pollution.

It is difficult to believe, looking at me sideways, that I am a physical fitness nut. My favourite form of transportation is my bicycle. I used my bicycle to go to work for many years, long before it was fashionable. There were not even bicycle racks at the place where I worked when I started using my bicycle to go to work every day, 6.8 miles each day. It was a wonderful physical workout. That is why I am in such fine aerodynamic shape today. It was wonderful to travel along and to realize there was almost zero pollution when I was using my bicycle, depending on how close someone was following me.

• (1705)

I remember also when catalytic converters came out. I really do not know what it is about them but I have had the personal

experience of travelling behind vehicles with them. For part of my trip I had to go on public roads. I was pumping away and breathing hard because to get this old motor going uses a lot of oxygen.

If I got behind one of the old vehicles, even though it felt a little uncomfortable it did not stop me from breathing. When the catalytic converters came out they choked me. All the scientists said it was much better, but I still remember when I was following a car up the hill from the high level bridge in Edmonton that if a car passed me with a catalytic converter I had to drop right back because I could not breathe it in. My body rejected the pollution coming from that vehicle.

We must do what we can in order to reduce pollution. I recommend that we go to bicycles, every one of us. This week for the first time I was surprised to see a fellow member of parliament on one of the city's buses. It happened to be a fellow Reformer.

I am amazed. We talk about it but who uses public transit in order to reduce pollution? Each of us likes to get in individual cabs or big limousines and drive around. We use these large vehicles one at a time. Why do we not personally take the responsibility, as I do whenever possible, to use public transportation?

[Translation]

**Ms. Jocelyne Girard-Bujold (Jonquière, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I do not know where things are headed today, but something is up.

The Reform Party member has just said that the only platform that could be a responsible statement on the environment is to be found in his party's blue book. It contains all the answers, if I understood him correctly.

I would therefore like to ask the Reform Party member why he is going to support Bill C-32. Will he say, like his colleague with whom he shared his time earlier, that half a loaf is better than none, and that that is why he supports Bill C-32?

[English]

**Mr. Ken Epp:** Mr. Speaker, in the short time I had I could only speak on one topic and I chose to speak about transportation, one of the larger contributions to pollutants.

There are industrial processes and others that use chemicals. Bill C-32 begins to address in a realistic way some, not all, of our concerns with industrial processes.

I need to tell the member and others that in my riding I have some very important petrochemical industries. If we are to be so hard on them that they can no longer operate, are we then ready to stop flying our airplanes, driving cars and having houses heated with hydrocarbon fuels? Will we put out our fireplaces and our bonfires? They are also a form of pollution. There is a limit to how far one can go.

*Government Orders*

Bill C-32 is a step in the right direction. It does not perhaps go as far as it ought to in some areas. Again, looking at me sideways, better half a loaf than none.

**Mr. Rick Laliberte (Churchill River, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member raised the topic of regularly reviewing environmental regulations based on sound science. The evidence I have seen in committee over the past year leads me to believe he is referring to political science. By no means have they strengthened the CEPA bill as it has been presented.

The closing clause of the respective amendment says that a review would take place in the other House. The next review of CEPA may not take place here. By that time the Liberals could dominate the other place and elected members would not have a say on what the next CEPA review would be like. Could the hon. member comment on that?

**Mr. Ken Epp:** Mr. Speaker, I am a very firm advocate of sound science as I am a math-physics major and I know just enough about chemistry to get me into trouble. The member is absolutely right when he says that about the Reform Party. We are committed to that.

• (1710)

I would like to refer to a personal view which I do not think is in our policy. I would like to see an auditor general of the environment, totally independent of the political world, so that decisions on the environment are not based on who has the strongest lobby group.

I talked about my little Mazda. I did not replace the spark plugs for 75,000 kilometres. Then I put the same ones back in because they were still good and used them until 100,000 kilometres. Yet I was being told that MMT, which was in the fuel ever since that vehicle was new, would foul these things up in 20,000 kilometres. That is not sound science. If that were true it should have happened right away and it did not. I believe in sound science.

**Ms. Paddy Torsney (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of the Environment, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, did the member opposite get his information or a copy of the bill on the government green lane at [www.ec.gc.ca/cepa](http://www.ec.gc.ca/cepa)?

Was the member opposite at our committee hearing the other day when the auditor for the environment, the person we put in place, Mr. Brian Emmett, the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development, made his report? He audited the government and made recommendations, some of which we have already followed through on and many of which are in the bill.

Was he thinking about the red book commitment which we fulfilled when he was talking about that auditor position?

**Mr. Ken Epp:** Mr. Speaker, that is wishful thinking. I have not read the pink book. I think it is starting to fade a little, with some of the records in it going awry. Unfortunately I have other duties in committee. I am on the finance committee and I seldom get to the environment committee. It is really quite a shame.

My understanding of the commissioner is that he is a political appointment. There is a problem with that because one knows where one's bread is buttered. I would like to see a totally—

**Ms. Elinor Caplan:** Shame on the member.

**Mr. Ken Epp:** Am I wrong? If I am wrong I want to be corrected. I think that position should be totally non-political, apolitical, dedicated to accurate and true science.

**Mr. Brent St. Denis (Algoma—Manitoulin, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I know in a couple of minutes we have to break for the vote. I would like to be on record, as I will later when we vote, as being in support of Bill C-32. It is a very important step in the history of improving the relationship between people and the environment.

There is a famous Chinese proverb which says that a journey of 1,000 miles starts with the first step. This is not a first step. Previous governments over the years have tried to deal with the needs of society and the needs of the environment.

The bill certainly is not perfect. Maybe it will take generations for us to find the best way to deal with the environment, but it is important that Bill C-32 pass and that this very important step be taken.

My northern Ontario riding includes the north shore of Lake Huron and the eastern shore of Lake Superior. It is a beautiful area. It is important to my constituents that strong, effective environmental legislation be in place. I have confidence that Bill C-32 will be that important step which my constituents need as we enter the next millennium.

Many of my communities depend on the forestry and mining sectors. At all times we have to balance the need for jobs and economic development with the needs of the environment. We cannot go back to the days when the population was small, when numbers were few. We are where we are. I believe that Bill C-32 provides us with the best balance possible at this point in time.

I encourage my colleagues across the way to support the government in this initiative.

• (1715)

[*Translation*]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** It being 5.15 p.m., pursuant to order made Monday, May 31, 1999, it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to complete the third reading stage of the bill now before the House.

*Government Orders*

[English]

Is the House ready for the question?

**Some hon. members:** Question.

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** All those opposed will please say nay.

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** In my opinion the yeas have it.

*And more than five members having risen:*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** Call in the members.

• (1745)

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

*(Division No. 543)***YEAS**

## Members

|                               |                                  |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Abbott                        | Ablonczy                         |
| Adams                         | Alcock                           |
| Anderson                      | Assad                            |
| Augustine                     | Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre) |
| Bachand (Richmond—Arthabaska) | Bailey                           |
| Baker                         | Bélair                           |
| Bélanger                      | Bennett                          |
| Bertrand                      | Bevilacqua                       |
| Blondin-Andrew                | Bonin                            |
| Bonwick                       | Borotsik                         |
| Boudria                       | Bradshaw                         |
| Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville) | Brisson                          |
| Brown                         | Bryden                           |
| Bulte                         | Byrne                            |
| Cadman                        | Calder                           |
| Caplan                        | Casey                            |
| Casson                        | Catterall                        |
| Cauchon                       | Chamberlain                      |
| Chan                          | Charbonneau                      |
| Chatters                      | Chrétien (Saint-Maurice)         |
| Clouthier                     | Coderre                          |
| Collenette                    | Comuzzi                          |
| Copps                         | Cullen                           |
| De Villiers                   | Dhaliwal                         |
| Dion                          | Discepola                        |
| Doyle                         | Dromisky                         |
| Drouin                        | Duhamel                          |
| Duncan                        | Easter                           |
| Eggleton                      | Epp                              |
| Finestone                     | Finlay                           |
| Folco                         | Fontana                          |
| Forseth                       | Fry                              |
| Gagliano                      | Galloway                         |
| Gilmour                       | Godfrey                          |
| Goldring                      | Goodale                          |
| Gouk                          | Graham                           |
| Grewal                        | Grey (Edmonton North)            |

|                                 |  |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Grose                           | Harb                                     |
| Harvard                         | Harvey                                   |
| Herron                          | Hill (Prince George—Peace River)         |
| Hilstrom                        | Hoeppner                                 |
| Hubbard                         | Ifody                                    |
| Jackson                         | Jennings                                 |
| Johnston                        | Jones                                    |
| Jordan                          | Keddy (South Shore)                      |
| Kenney (Calgary Southeast)      | Kerpan                                   |
| Keyes                           | Kilger (Stormont—Dundas—Charlottenburgh) |
| Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)    | Knutson                                  |
| Konrad                          | Lastewka                                 |
| Lavigne                         | Lee                                      |
| Leung                           | Longfield                                |
| Lowther                         | Lunn                                     |
| MacAulay                        | MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough)   |
| Mahoney                         | Malhi                                    |
| Maloney                         | Manley                                   |
| Mark                            | Marleau                                  |
| Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca) | Massé                                    |
| Matthews                        | Mayfield                                 |
| McCormick                       | McGuire                                  |
| McKay (Scarborough East)        | McLellan (Edmonton West)                 |
| McNally                         | McTeague                                 |
| McWhinney                       | Meredith                                 |
| Mifflin                         | Mills (Red Deer)                         |
| Mitchell                        | Morrison                                 |
| Muise                           | Murray                                   |
| Myers                           | Nault                                    |
| Obhrai                          | O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)                |
| O'Reilly                        | Pankiw                                   |
| Paradis                         | Patry                                    |
| Penson                          | Peric                                    |
| Peterson                        | Pettigrew                                |
| Phinney                         | Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex)             |
| Pillitteri                      | Power                                    |
| Pratt                           | Provenzano                               |
| Ramsay                          | Redman                                   |
| Reed                            | Reynolds                                 |
| Richardson                      | Ritz                                     |
| Robillard                       | Rock                                     |
| Saada                           | Schmidt                                  |
| Scott (Fredericton)             | Scott (Skeena)                           |
| Sekora                          | Shepherd                                 |
| Solberg                         | Speller                                  |
| St. Denis                       | Steckle                                  |
| Stewart (Brant)                 | Stewart (Northumberland)                 |
| Stinson                         | St-Jacques                               |
| St-Julien                       | Strahl                                   |
| Szabo                           | Telegdi                                  |
| Thibeault                       | Thompson (Wild Rose)                     |
| Torsney                         | Ur                                       |
| Valeri                          | Vanclief                                 |
| Vellacott                       | Volpe                                    |
| Wappel                          | Whelan                                   |
| White (Langley—Abbotsford)      | White (North Vancouver)                  |
| Wilfert                         | Williams                                 |
| Wood—189                        |  |

**NAYS**

## Members

|                             |
|-----------------------------|
| Anders                      |
| Bachand (Saint-Jean)        |
| Bernier (Bonaventure—Gaspé— |
| Bigras                      |
| Brien                       |
| Cardin                      |
| Crête                       |
| de Savoye                   |
| Dockrill                    |
| Duceppe                     |
| Earle                       |



Gauthier  
Godin (Châteauguay)  
Guimond  
Kraft Sloan  
Lalonde  
Lebel  
Lincoln  
Mancini  
Marchand  
Ménard  
Nystrom  
Picard (Drummond)  
Riis  
Sauvageau  
St-Hilaire  
Venne—53

Girard-Bujold  
Guay  
Hardy  
Laliberte  
Laurin  
Lill  
Loubier  
Marceau  
McDonough  
Mercier  
Perron  
Proctor  
Rocheleau  
Solomon  
Stoffer

#### PAIRED MEMBERS

Bakopanos  
Canuel  
Desrochers  
Gray (Windsor West)  
Lefebvre  
Marchi  
Normand  
Proud  
Tremblay (Rimouski—Mitis)

Barnes  
Dalphond-Guiral  
Fournier  
Ianno  
Limoges (Windsor—St. Clair)  
Martin (LaSalle—Émard)  
Plamondon  
Tremblay (Lac-Saint-Jean)  
Turp

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

(Bill read the third time and passed)

• (1750)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** It being 5.52 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's order paper.

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## PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

### WORKPLACE SAFETY

The House resumed from April 23 consideration of the motion and of the amendment.

**Mr. Peter Mancini (Sydney—Victoria, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, knowing how I tend to speak I will take the four minutes instead of the three.

In my remarks I was indicating to the House the importance of the motion put forward by my colleague from Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough. I indicated how we in this party would be supporting it. We had introduced very similar legislation through a private member's bill by the leader of our party, the hon. member for Halifax.

I talked a little about those of us in mining communities, those of us who come from towns where we know the price paid when mine

### Private Members' Business

safety regulations are not adhered to. I was concluding by saying that what we need is not further study on this. That is the only criticism I have of the motion. What we need is action. That is exactly what the bill put forward by the New Democratic Party would do.

There are those who will wonder whether or not other nations have legislation. They do. I point out briefly in the short time I have that both Australia and Great Britain are taking steps to address the problem of illegal criminal actions by corporations that result in the deaths of their workers. The focus here is Westray but it could apply to many other industries and many other corporations.

The tragedy among many tragedies in Westray was that the victims' families sought to see justice done. They sought to see the major players in that corporation brought to court and tried for determination as to their guilt or their innocence. Unfortunately, the Canadian judicial system could not do that because there is no law that holds a corporation liable for the murder of its workers.

I have indicated that Australia and Great Britain are moving in that direction. The Australian criminal code of 1995 allows corporations to be held liable for criminal conduct if it can be proven that the practices or culture of the company encouraged or at least did not prohibit the alleged offence. Had we that piece of legislation in this country, then the corporate owners who in the finding of Justice Richards wilfully neglected the welfare of their workers, could have been brought to justice by Justice Richards.

The British Law Reform Commission in 1996 recommended to parliament in that country the creation of an offence of corporate killing where the behaviour of the corporation falls below that which would be expected of a corporation in the circumstances.

I urge members of the government when they are considering the changes to the Cape Breton Development Corporation that they bear in mind by divesting themselves of their responsibility, they move the mining legislation to the provincial legislation and the same accident can happen in Cape Breton that happened in Westray.

• (1755)

**Mrs. Brenda Chamberlain (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Labour, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak to Motion No. 455 regarding accountability for workplace safety.

The hon. member's motion raises an issue that is of interest to a great many of us in this House. I would like to thank him for bringing this matter before the House and for drawing attention to the question of safety in the workplace, an important issue for all Canadians.

*Private Members' Business*

I share the hon. member's concern and sadness for the Westray disaster. None of us can look back on that event, especially after hearing the results of the public inquiry that followed, and not want to do something to prevent a similar disaster from ever happening again.

I would like the hon. member to know that I share his desire to act and that I am in support of the spirit of this motion which has the goal of ensuring that corporate executives and directors are held properly accountable for workplace safety. That said however, I cannot support Motion No. 455 because of its possible implications beyond federal jurisdiction.

In looking at ways to achieve safer and healthier workplaces, legislative change is one way to address the problem of accountability. Legislative change such as the hon. member opposite is proposing is quite complex and not easily achieved.

In Canada there are 14 different jurisdictions covering occupational safety and health. Legislation on these matters is covered by the federal, provincial and territorial governments which makes the situation very complex. For example, the North American agreement on labour co-operation, a labour side agreement to NAFTA, still has not been ratified by all of our provinces and territories even after several years. In other words, securing an agreement for legislative change at the federal level is one thing but implementation is a different matter entirely due to the issue of jurisdiction. This is not to say that occupational health and safety does not require our attention as members of parliament. Certainly not.

In 1997 on average one out of 18 Canadian workers was injured in the workplace meaning that a workplace accident occurred every nine seconds. There were a total of 800,000 injuries that year with 18 million working days lost, the equivalent of one year's work for 71,000 Canadians. Sadly, workers between the ages of 15 and 24 are most at risk for work related accidents.

In addition to the high human cost, there is also a significant impact on the economy. In 1997 workplace accidents resulted in \$5 billion in direct compensation payments to victims and an additional \$5 billion in indirect costs to the employer.

Numbers like these are cause for concern for all of us. Given the human and economic costs involved, we should explore the potential need for new legislative approaches to ensure health and safety in our workplace.

I want to assure the hon. member opposite that we are looking at the Westray tragedy specifically. My colleague the Minister of Justice has written to the Attorney General of Nova Scotia offering her commitment to study recommendation 73 of the Westray report. As well she is instructing federal officials to develop options for legislative reform. A number of stakeholders and experts will be consulted in this process.

The explosion in the Westray mine on May 9, 1992 killed 26 miners. A public inquiry clearly established that incompetence and mismanagement created the unsafe working environment that was the direct cause of this terrible tragedy. The inquiry's report also set out 74 recommendations for improving mine safety and preventing such a sad accident from ever happening again. The last two recommendations deal with corporate accountability.

Recommendation 74 suggested that the Government of Nova Scotia review its occupational health and safety legislation to ensure that corporations are held accountable for any failure to secure and maintain a safe workplace. This recommendation is outside the scope of today's debate but I mention it because it illustrates the role that provincial legislatures have to play in the area of workplace safety and corporate accountability.

• (1800 )

Recommendation 73 states that the Government of Canada, through the Department of Justice, should institute a study of the accountability of corporate executives and directors for the wrongful or negligent acts of the corporation, and should introduce in the Parliament of Canada such amendments to the legislation as are necessary to ensure that corporate executives and directors are held properly accountable for workplace safety.

As I have noted, this recommendation is being studied both in terms of the responsibility of the corporation itself and also the liability of the people it employs.

Legislation is not the only way to address the issue of workplace safety. We can also achieve great benefit by working proactively to promote a better understanding and awareness of its importance. Over the years, we have seen the correlation between increased education and awareness and an improved occupational health and safety record. By focusing more attention on training and education, we can and will reduce the incidence of accidents. There is no question that educating people, teaching them how to work safely, is a key component.

This is something that the government has already made a priority. In recent years, the labour program has worked closely with its partners in the public and private sectors to raise awareness about the rights and responsibilities for the health and safety in Canadian workplaces. The emphasis has been on the prevention of injury and illness. By seeking to increase awareness and understanding among employers and employees, as well as the public at large, we reinforce the message that individual actions can be just as important as legislation when it comes to improving workplace safety.

In my riding of Guelph—Wellington there are several examples of the effectiveness of using education and awareness to improve workplace safety. For example, Blount Canada continues to implement and expand its three year old ergonomic improvement

process aimed at preventing injuries, not only by improving equipment but also by providing additional training opportunities to its employees. Blount has seen that even a small increase in awareness translates into a big improvement in safety.

On June 16, Genesta Manufacturing, also located in Guelph—Wellington, will celebrate three years without a single lost time accident. Its systemic health and safety system, combined with weekly staff safety meetings, monthly safety audits and monthly management reviews have made safety everybody's very first priority.

Huntsman Corporation, another example from my riding, involves all of its employees in its health and safety initiatives. Its joint health and safety committee meets three times more often than is required by law. Huntsman also has a safety recognition program for the employees who remain accident-free. This commitment to safety carries over into the community by working closely with the local fire and police departments and other municipal officials to develop emergency response plans in the event that an accident does occur.

The spirit of Motion No. 455 is commendable. The goal of creating a safer workplace is one we all share in all parties, whether we use legislation, education or, most effectively, a combination of the two. I wholeheartedly support the idea of working on the problem and know that the government will continue to address the issue of workplace safety.

In reality, safety is a concern to all of us. Education is one of the most important components and we will continue to investigate this area. We must.

**Mr. Gerald Keddy (South Shore, PC):** Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest to the hon. member opposite speaking about the motion and her idea that she could support the principle of the motion but not the motion itself. I think there is something wrong with that logic.

I also listened with interest to the member of the NDP who talked about a similar NDP motion and how they supported this motion in principle.

• (1805)

I think it should be made very clear to the members of the House and to all the people listening to this debate that the member for Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough filed this private member's bill during the first month of parliament. The New Democratic Party waited a full six months before it filed a similar bill. It is important to get that on the record.

I am pleased to rise for the second hour of debate on behalf of the Progressive Conservative Party of Canada to discuss Motion No. 455, a motion introduced by my colleague from Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough.

### *Private Members' Business*

I would like to explain what happened on that dreadful morning back in May 1992. It may help everyone in the House gain a better understanding of what provoked this motion. On May 9, 1992 at 5.20 a.m., a violent explosion ripped under the tiny community of Plymouth, just east of the town of Stellarton, Nova Scotia. The explosion occurred in the depths of the Westray coal mine, instantly killing the 26 miners working there at the time.

Motion No. 455 was introduced to ensure that something like this never happens again. Workplace safety must be the norm across the country no matter what profession one chooses. Every Canadian has the right to feel safe at work, and every corporate executive must take the initiative to ensure those standards are met. Motion No. 455 reads as follows:

That, in the opinion of this House, the Criminal Code or other appropriate federal statutes should be amended in accordance with Recommendation 73 of the Province of Nova Scotia's Public Inquiry into the Westray disaster, specifically with the goal of ensuring that corporate executives and directors are held properly accountable for workplace safety.

Recommendation 73 in the report of the inquiry commissioner, Justice Peter Richard, reads as follows:

The Government of Canada, through the Department of Justice, should institute a study of accountability of corporate executives and directors for the wrongful or negligent acts of the corporation and should introduce in the Parliament of Canada such amendments to legislation as are necessary to ensure that corporate executives and directors are held properly accountable for workplace safety.

I see nothing in that proposed bill that would prevent any member of parliament from supporting this excellent piece of proposed legislation.

Recommendation 73 does not endorse any particular legislative action by parliament. However, I will proceed by stressing that Motion No. 455 wishes to address the concerns referred to by Justice Peter Richard in his report, with an emphasis on the personal liability of key corporate officials.

The proposal to create a new criminal offence for corporate officials for failing to maintain safe workplaces would, by definition, require adding new provisions to the Criminal Code. This could be done by adding new sections to the Criminal Code under sections 467.5 and 467.6. Section 467.6 would extend criminal liability for this corporate failure to every officer or director of the corporation who knew or ought to have known, based on their experience, qualifications and duties, about the unsafe conditions in question.

Another way to address the matter would be to amend the Criminal Code provisions which define criminal negligence, section 219, and culpable homicide, section 222, in a way which specifically addresses death or bodily harm caused by a failure to maintain workplace safety on the part of a director or an executive of a corporation.

The drawback to this approach, however, is that it does not deal with situations where death or injury do not result. As well, if one

*Private Members' Business*

wished to strengthen the accountability of corporate officials for workplace safety violations of their corporations, one could amend section 149.2 of the Criminal Code to include additional circumstances in which their liability would be triggered.

I am sure members are aware that most corporate officials support and foster safe working conditions. However, others have a more cavalier attitude toward fair labour practices and workplace safety. This approach cannot be condoned in any capacity. As Canadians and as workers, we are entitled to wake up and go to our place of work, wherever that may take us, and know that our well-being as individuals is protected and our workplace safety is reinforced and upheld on a daily basis.

However, in many situations the almighty dollar overshadows the secure working environment to which we are all entitled. Of course, the bottom line of any business is to make a profit at the end of the day, and that is a very normal mindset for anyone who operates a business, large or small. If there is no profit at the end of the day there will be no business shortly thereafter. In short, profitability equals sustainability.

• (1810)

However, we must not let employers allow profits to take precedence over workplace safety. This mindset is precisely what sets the tone for workplace tragedies and creates unsafe working conditions. Businesses must ensure that their employees are adequately supervised and consistently updated on safe work practices. Sadly, in the past we have all witnessed poorly trained officials doing jobs they were not properly trained to perform.

It is essential that companies take the time to train employees so that additional risk is limited for that employee and those around them. Management must also ensure that their employees have an appreciation for any special dangers inherent at the job site.

In the case of the Westray coal mine specifically, many of the tradesmen were prone to perform unsafe tasks or to take dangerous shortcuts in their work. In many cases there was no question that management was well aware, or ought to have been aware, that safe mining practices were not being performed.

As stated in Justice Richard's report:

—there was no question that Westray management knew that the levels of methane underground at the coal mine were hazardous. Under section 72 of the Coal Mines Regulation Act, such conditions mandated the withdrawal of workers from the affected area, and that is the primary reason, management in this instance chose to ignore the fact.

As a case in point, to make matters even worse, this same management purchased farm tractors to work underground in a potentially explosive environment. These same farm tractors went directly from the lot to the mine and were not explosion proof.

In this situation, as in all situations, the open door policy of management could have helped prevent the death of 26 coal miners that devastating morning. No employee ever wants to feel as if their safety concerns are falling on deaf ears. A collaborated effort between upper, middle and lower management must be invoked to create an environment that is hazardous free for every employee in Canada. Of course, accidents happen, but measures must be in place to minimize the risk of death and injury.

No single environment is 100% danger free but in most cases the risk of danger can be significantly less with a bit of common sense.

Referring to the Westray coal tragedy, the inquiry set out the following: the occurrence of the explosion that resulted in loss of life; whether the occurrence was preventable; whether any neglect caused or contributed to the explosion in any way; and finally, whether the mine was in compliance with the applicable statutes, regulations, orders, rules and directions.

These questions that were investigated at the time of the inquiry are many of the same questions that should be reviewed with business executives on a daily basis to ensure that they are operating a safe company. As well, it would be a good opportunity to ensure that businesses are in compliance with the current regulations.

As representatives of the federal government, we have to ensure that accountability is upheld in the country so that situations such as Westray and others do not repeat themselves.

The devastation of Westray will be felt for many years in the tiny community of Stellarton and indeed in all of Nova Scotia.

Today, on behalf of every individual affected by this horrible tragedy, I ask members to lend their assistance to this motion and give it their strongest consideration and support.

It is incumbent upon every member of parliament in the House to look at the motion as it has been put forth. It is a very strong attempt to curb such an accident from ever happening again in Canada. I think the member for Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough deserves our support and the support of the House for the motion.

**Mr. John McKay (Scarborough East, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the hon. member for Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough for bringing this motion to the attention of the House, and his efforts to bring up the motion so that members can reflect on its intent and the issues that it raises for all of us.

I know only peripherally the tragic circumstances that bring the motion forward, but the hon. member needs to be congratulated again for making that effort.

*Private Members' Business*

• (1815)

The motion is to amend the Criminal Code or other appropriate federal statutes to ensure that corporate executives and directors are held properly accountable for workplace safety. I understand there is an amendment to the motion to include the phrase "following a study by the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights". I understand that to be an amendment by a Bloc member.

The hon. member is an active member of the justice committee. I have spent quite a number of hours with him on the justice committee on a variety of issues. I know he is keenly engaged in justice issues. I also know his background as a crown attorney and I dare say a very good crown attorney.

In the work of a crown attorney the question comes up, if there is an incident, what will the charge be, what can we prove? The police come forward with their evidence and say that a particular charge needs to be laid. The crown will test the evidence to see whether it is sufficient to prove guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

The question here is whether the circumstances as generated by the Westray disaster show some deficiency in the Criminal Code or in some federal statute. Were I a crown attorney or were he a crown attorney in those circumstances, the first question that would need to be asked is whether there is current legislation that adequately deals with the issue.

It needs to be brought out in the debate that the Canada Labour Code already provides for officer and director liability. The code provides that directors and officers of corporations found guilty of an offence are to be liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding \$100,000. In addition part II provides for the possibility of conviction on indictment for a fine not exceeding \$1 million and/or imprisonment for a term not exceeding two years.

We may quibble with whether those are adequate sanctions in circumstances such as the Westray disaster, but it is not as if the legislation in Canada is silent on the matter. It clearly provides for director liability. I wish to make a distinction here between director liability which is somewhat frequently removed from the incident itself and the tests that usually go on with criminal liability where the individual has to have actually done the action in order to be liable.

If the crown chose not to proceed by way of the Canada Labour Code for whatever reason, is there some basis for the charge under the code as it presently exists? Criminal negligence is defined in section 219 of the Criminal Code: "Everyone is criminally negligent who in doing anything or in omitting to do anything that it is his duty to do, shows wanton or reckless disregard for the lives or safety of other persons". I will repeat for the purposes of emphasis "in omitting to do anything that it is his duty to do, shows wanton or reckless disregard for the lives or safety of other persons".

I am not as familiar with the facts of the Westray disaster as is my hon. friend. However from what I do know of the Westray disaster, that appears to me to be the charge which a crown attorney might reasonably lay in the circumstances. If the facts established that the directors or officers showed a wanton or reckless disregard for the lives or safety of other persons and if the crown decided not proceed under the Canada Labour Code for whatever reason, I would have to question why we would want to amend the Criminal Code if that is present.

• (1820)

Section 220 concerns criminal negligence causing death: "Every person who by criminal negligence causes death of another person is guilty of an indictable offence and is liable". In section 221: "Every person who by criminal negligence causes bodily harm to another person is guilty of an indictable offence and is liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 10 years".

I would submit there is adequate provision in the Criminal Code as it presently stands for liability of a director or an officer of a corporation who shows wanton or reckless disregard for the lives or safety of other persons. I am therefore in the situation of sympathizing with the issue that is raised by recommendation 73 in the inquiry, but I am hard pressed to know how the laws of Canada as they are presently written both in the Criminal Code and in the Canada Labour Code are inadequate to address the circumstances.

Failing the issue of being able to address how there is a deficiency, I cannot see how we could support the passage of this motion.

In summary may I say that I commend the hon. member for his response to a disaster in his community which has implications that are really only remotely understood by us. Having said that, I am at a loss to know how there is an inadequacy in the legislation, both in the Criminal Code and in the Canada Labour Code, which would not adequately respond to the issues.

Those are the issues I wanted to raise in response to the motion. I would find myself in difficulty in supporting the motion.

**Mr. Gurmant Grewal (Surrey Central, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of the people of Surrey Central to speak to Private Member's Motion No. 455 which asks the government to amend the Criminal Code or other federal statutes to ensure that corporate executives and directors be held accountable for workplace safety.

This motion also asks the House to pay particular attention to recommendation 73 of the Nova Scotia Westray mine disaster inquiry. It calls on the Government of Canada through the Department of Justice to study the accountability of corporate executives and directors for wrongful or negligent acts. The recommendation

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asks for the amendment of legislation to be introduced as necessary to ensure the accountability of these executives and directors.

All Canadians know the solemn background to the introduction of this motion. The Westray mine disaster claimed the lives of 26 Canadian mine workers. These disasters are a devastating event for any mining community. Our hearts go out to the families and friends of the victims of the Westray disaster. It was a very sad event in our history.

We want to learn from this disaster and prevent or at least prepare for the next disaster. We want to establish lines of accountability. If we can prevent a tragedy, then we want to know who is responsible for not preventing one and what as a society we are going to do about it. That is the intent of the motion we are debating.

What is wrong with this motion is that it has deviated from the recommendation made by the Westray inquiry. The inquiry asked for the matter of accountability to be studied. The motion jumps to Criminal Code amendments. The NDP leader's Private Member's Bill C-468 is similar to what the present motion is asking us to do. This smacks of political opportunism to me.

The mistake in the motion is that it does not reflect what the commission of inquiry wanted and I think it is premature. Let us consider a few things that need to be examined and what this misdirected motion is missing.

• (1825)

We must consider the position of unions. What about union executive responsibility and accountability? What about shop stewards and their responsibility for on-site safety and health? What about the responsibility of federal and provincial labour inspectors? What about other government and ministerial responsibilities?

Would smaller companies be hindered or hurt if only the executives were held criminally accountable for an unsafe or hazardous worksite? On the other hand the government should protect our small businesses that are creating jobs and are the engines of our economy.

The crown in Nova Scotia currently has the power to prosecute negligent mine managers who are on-site and responsible. This is true across Canada. Yes we should study our laws and make them stronger if need be.

I contacted the B.C. Workers Compensation Board with respect to this motion. In British Columbia the Workers Compensation Act is being changed effective October 1, 1999. The changes include dealing with penalties for corporate directors whose companies are in violation of health and safety regulations. These changes come

from recommendations made by the royal commission that studied the Workers Compensation Board in British Columbia. The commission recognized the need for personal responsibility under prescribed circumstances on the part of senior management in order to enhance workplace health and safety.

Recommendation No. 37 recommends that the province's occupational health and safety statute allow the occupational health and safety agency to apply to the courts to obtain an injunction. Until October 1, 1999 the Workers Compensation Act does not grant the board the authority to obtain an injunction when it feels that the health and safety of workers is not being looked after.

The power of getting such an injunction may be available through other legislation, but in British Columbia we felt it necessary to put the authority to get an injunction into the Workers Compensation Act.

Injunctions allow an agency to take prompt action to address potential or existing harm. They can be obtained quickly, often without advance notice. Injunctions allow us to rely on our courts for enforcement power. If the injunction is disobeyed, the breach can be converted into civil or criminal contempt proceedings. I believe this is what the current motion is trying to obtain.

Let us look closely at what prosecutions can be pursued. I quote from a document:

Prosecutions can occur when a recommendation for a more stringent sanction arises out of an accident rather than merely a hazardous situation.

Perhaps the greatest shortcoming with prosecution as an enforcement option has been the relatively high chance of acquittal.

Traditionally, the chances of an accused successfully defending an occupational health and safety prosecution and being acquitted have always been relatively good. Most prosecutions are against employers, and the low conviction rate reflects the fact that judges are not keen on convicting employers, except in cases where management has clearly been at fault. . . (Fault) should not usually be the relevant legal criterion for deciding whether someone has breached an occupational health and safety statute. What sometimes happens in practice, however, is simply that the judges interpret the facts and the law in light of their own perceptions about the value of health and safety prosecutions.

Another disadvantage from a compliance perspective is that judges can choose to impose fines and/or imprisonment that falls short of the maximum a statute might permit. In addition, prosecutions do not provide a direct remedy for affected workers.

The strength of prosecution as an enforcement option is that a monetary penalty and/or a term of imprisonment can make a very strong impression on any offender, employer and worker alike, and send a strong message of deterrence. In addition, the stigma associated with prosecution can have a profound effect on a corporate or non-corporate employer concerned with its public image. This effect may extend beyond that realized by the financial penalty.

• (1830)

The Liberals did not listen to the Krever commission of inquiry into the tainted blood tragedy in Canada. The commission of inquiry on aboriginals in Canada is being ignored or toyed with by

the Liberals. The Liberals stopped the Somalia inquiry dead in its tracks. There the people of Nova Scotia and all other Canadians know that the Liberals will not do anything about the recommendations of the Westray mine disaster inquiry.

In conclusion, I support the recommendations of the Westray mine disaster inquiry and I urge the government to conduct a study as recommended.

**Mr. Lynn Myers (Waterloo—Wellington, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I reiterate that the government is committed to promoting the fundamental right of Canadians to a safe and healthy work environment and to considering new ideas and suggestions which would help us to meet those commitments.

The motion being presented is certainly worthy of note and interesting to consider. I am therefore pleased to join this debate and to share some of my thoughts on the motion and the amendment before the House.

From the tone of the debate on this motion so far, it seems that members on all sides of the House share a concern for Canadian workers. We know that to be true. Certainly it is an important issue that we on the government side share. We also share a desire to see safer and healthier workplaces. We want to reduce the cost of workplace accidents and illness in both human and economic terms.

Every year approximately 800,000 workers are injured or contract illnesses while doing their jobs. Millions of work days are lost because of illness or injury. Accordingly the cost to the Canadian economy runs to an estimated \$10 billion annually. There is no question in both human and economic terms these costs are too high and require our attention.

While we may be in accord on the desire for change, we need to look at possible solutions a little more carefully. For example, Motion No. 455 asks that we amend the appropriate federal statutes including the Criminal Code. This is easier said than done. Proposals to amend federal statutes relating to labour matters can have far-reaching implications and we need to look more carefully at them.

It is true that it is within federal power to create new offences under the Criminal Code, but we have to be cognizant of the fact that such changes could infringe on the jurisdictions of the provinces and territories to legislate in areas of workplace safety.

Members of the House are well aware of the sensitivity of federal-provincial concerns in areas of economic and social policy. I dare say we would not want to initiate any changes to federal legislation which would have an unattended impact. In this case, for example, while the intent of the motion is one thing, the impact of the changes it proposes is quite another.

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Since amendments to the Criminal Code that have implications for provincial labour jurisdiction would require the support of the provinces and territories, we need to know how we to obtain that kind of support. We need to study this aspect very carefully.

To start with, we need to look at what legislation is already in place such as under the Canada Labour Code, for example. As hon. members will recall, legislation concerning occupational safety and health in the federal jurisdiction is part of the Canada Labour Code.

The code covers a broad range of industries under federal jurisdiction. The best examples are railways, highway transport, telecommunications, pipelines, shipping, radio and television broadcasting, banks, and a few other areas. In addition, the code covers employees of the federal public service including employees of some 40 crown corporations and agencies.

Part II of the Canada Labour Code is of particular interest to us because it deals with occupational health and safety. It is under part II that we already have legislation in place to deal with workplace safety, at least in the federal jurisdiction. This legislation is intended to prevent accidents and injuries to health arising out of, linked with or occurring in the course of employment which is subject to federal jurisdiction.

● (1835)

In other words, part II of the existing Canada Labour Code already includes provisions for standards for workplace safety as well as sanctions and penalties for those who are found to be in contravention of the code.

As we consider this issue it is very important to look at what is already in the Canada Labour Code, specifically part II of that code. Even if we eventually look to solutions beyond the Canada Labour Code, we will need to keep in mind the three principles set out in the code as fundamental rights of workers.

These are the right to know about known or foreseeable hazards in the workplace, the right to participate in identifying and resolving job related safety and health problems; and the right to refuse dangerous work if the employee has reasonable cause to believe that a situation constitutes a danger to him or her or to another employee.

The code also includes a set of occupational safety and health regulations that prescribe standards and procedures for both employers and employees to follow. Part II of the labour code says that corporate executives and directors will be held accountable if these standards are not met. If company directors and officers are found guilty of an offence under the labour code, they will be liable on a summary conviction to a fine of up to \$100,000. For a conviction on indictment the labour code calls for a fine of up to \$1 million and/or imprisonment for a term of up to two years.

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For the federal jurisdiction we already have sanctions in place which govern workplace safety issues and hold corporate officers and directors liable for their actions in cases of negligence or wrongdoing. Although we have legislation in place under the Canada Labour Code, we must recognize that it does not cover the majority of workers in Canada. It only covers those who fall under federal jurisdiction.

It is fair to say that we have more work to do in the area of legislating workplace safety. Instead of referring the matter to the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights as proposed by the member, I would prefer to see the matter referred to the Minister of Justice for further study. In other words, I cannot support the Motion No. 455 as proposed and I think the majority of Canadians in reviewing this matter would agree with my position.

**Mrs. Michelle Dockrill (Bras d'Or—Cape Breton, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I will elaborate a bit on something my colleague from South Shore alluded to earlier when he talked about the initiative we are discussing tonight. We are discussing a motion that was put forward by the member for Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough. With reference to the initiative by the New Democratic Party, I would like to declare that our initiative is of a legal nature. Although the motion will hopefully gain the willingness of the House, our initiative provides the legal means to do so.

When it comes to defining in one crystal clear example the principle which underlines this motion, the principle is clear in the Westray mine disaster of 1992. Seven years ago more than two dozen men went to work and died there. They died horrible deaths, deaths made more terrible because they were completely unnecessary and made more tragic because those men died, according to what some believe, to boost the company's profits.

In the aftermath of the disaster fingers were pointed by all sides, including the accusation that the men who died were found responsible for their deaths. The commission rejected that assertion, as well it should have, and pointed the finger of blame at a culture of greed which permeated the company. Ignoring the dangerous nature of the business, the owners tried to extract every cent they could from a workforce desperate for work, from a community where any job would receive 100 applications. I am providing these details because I believe they are critical to achieving an understanding of what truly occurred in May 1992.

I will always be the first to stand in support of good business, large or small, that treats its workers with dignity and respect. What I aim to do here is to expand the definition of a successful corporation to make it include the successful and safe guidance of any workforce through their working lives.

I believe this motion is based on one of the strongest foundations of our law which states that we are all responsible for our actions.

• (1840)

In recent years this basic rule of law has been stretched, twisted and manipulated. Some would say we must remember that those who stretch, twist and manipulate the law are individuals who make choices, who decide they will overlook flaws in their equipment, who will cut back on safety training, and who will knowingly send their workers into dangerous environments. Those individuals should be held accountable for those choices.

In the closing years of this millennium we have finally reached the stage of evolution in our civilization where we no longer allow the excuse of I was just following orders to stand as a valid defence for knowingly causing harm to others. When it comes to the behaviour of our military and our government officials, we now expect that every individual will make a moral decision based not on what they have been told but on what they know to be the difference between right and wrong.

We hope the motion will expand this welcome step forward and could possibly be a prelude to the legal initiative that has been put forth by the New Democratic Party, so that in the future it will not be possible for a mine manager to say that the company president forced him to order the alteration of safety reports or for his CEO to be protected from blame.

In addition to responsibility equality is a foundation stone of society. We may never achieve it but it remains a goal, an ideal toward which we all strive. By allowing one significant segment of our society to remain protected from our law is a flagrant violation of the principle of equality. Is a violation easily healed, a problem easily solved?

As I have said before, my party is not seeking a witch hunt as we have no desire to increase the cost of doing business. We all hope to achieve by the passage of the motion an increase in profitability as a small number of unscrupulous firms that keep their prices artificially low by exposing their workers to danger are forced from the market. That opens the way for responsible firms to increase their competitiveness and to increase not only their bottom lines but the standard of living of their workers, their communities and their country.

Whenever this measure is discussed or contemplated by anyone in the House, I hope the memory of those 26 men who died seven years ago in Nova Scotia will stay with them. There are those citizens and business people who can and do know what it takes to run a responsible and safe enterprise and who put those beliefs into practice every day.

As a parliament we have a responsibility to set the moral course for our government. When it comes to the motion before us I urge all members to support it for success and decency and to reject those who would cover their failures with the bodies of their workers.



**Mr. Roy Cullen (Etobicoke North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to have the opportunity to speak to Motion No. 455. The motion says that we should amend federal statutes, including the Criminal Code, in order to address the issue of accountability and liability for safety in the workplace in relation to recommendation 73 of the public inquiry of the province of Nova Scotia into the Westray disaster.

I doubt if anyone in the House would not share the member's concern for the victims and for the families of the victims, those who were so tragically affected by the Westray disaster.

The Westray disaster was a tragedy that captured the attention of the whole nation. Although it happened some time ago it remains in our minds and underlines the need for all of us in public office to be sensitive to the concerns of workers and to the need to ensure safe and secure workplaces. Workers are the backbone of our economy. Fatalities, injuries and illnesses in the workplace cause them and their families to suffer both in human terms and economically.

The cost of workplace accidents is high. It is estimated that on top of all human costs, the dollar costs to our economy are as much as \$10 million a year. These costs are too high and we need to look at ways to bring them down.

I commend the member opposite for introducing the motion. It provides us with an opportunity to look at the situation of workplace safety in Canada and to consider what needs to be done by the federal government to ensure safe and healthy workplaces for Canadians.

• (1845)

The motion proposes that we need a new legislative approach to workplace safety. Legislation is clearly one option, but so is education. There are many experts in the field of occupational health and safety who feel that prevention through education and training is every bit as important as intervention through legislation. These people understand the value of promoting education and training in order to reduce the incidence of illness and accidents in the workplace.

The national day of mourning was held last April, for example, and we asked Canadians to remember workers who were killed or injured as a result of occupational accidents or illnesses. The Canadian flag was flown at half-mast on Parliament Hill in memory of all those workers who lost their lives or who were injured on the job.

In addition, governments and organizations throughout North America annually co-operate to hold North American occupational safety and health week. This year North American occupational safety and health week was marked from May 17 to 23. As part of this occasion the Government of Canada joined with the govern-

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ments of the United States and Mexico to promote awareness of workplace safety throughout North America.

In addition, Canadian organizations, such as the Canadian Society of Safety Engineering and the Canadian Centre for Occupational Safety and Health, are working in partnership with the federal government and others in Canadian society to promote safe work practices. These organizations produce excellent material to help labour, business, governments and others interested in occupational health and safety to learn about working together to identify and implement new approaches to promote workplace safety. The educational information is distributed broadly to employers and employees. The Canadian Centre for Occupational Safety and Health has also created a very useful website that has gained an international reputation.

The labour program is very supportive of these activities. Indeed, for the last several years the labour program has played a leading role in emphasizing education and awareness as a means of promoting better workplace safety.

As hon. members can see, there is a wide variety of initiatives under way under the leadership of Canada's Minister of Labour, initiatives that provide useful information and focus the attention of employers, employees and the general public on the importance of preventing injury and illness in the workplace through education and awareness. Although the motion does not talk about the use of information to create safer work environments, it is important to keep in mind that education and awareness are also important aspects of our existing approach to promote workplace safety.

The second part of the approach, of course, is legislation. It was some 30 years ago that the federal government developed the occupational safety and health legislation to cover employees and workplaces under federal jurisdiction. Over the years federal legislation and regulations relating to occupational health and safety have been consolidated under the Canada Labour Code. As we consider the motion, we also need to consider what is in place under the Canada Labour Code, especially under Part II of the code. Part II of the code concerns occupational safety and health for employees working in organizations under federal jurisdiction.

The Canada Labour Code establishes three fundamental rights for workers. First, the right to know about unsafe conditions. Second, the right to participate in workplace decisions relating to safety. Third, the right to refuse dangerous work. The code also includes a set of occupational safety and health regulations that prescribe standards and procedures for both employers and employees.

Federal government inspectors visit workplaces, respond to complaints, conduct investigations, prohibit access to workplaces deemed hazardous and can impose fines for non-compliance. If company directors and officers are found guilty of an offence under the labour code, they will be liable on a summary conviction to a

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fine of up to \$100,000. For a conviction on indictment, the labour code calls for a fine of up to \$1 million and/or imprisonment for a term of up to two years.

In other words, with the Canada Labour Code we already have a model in place to cover the enforcement of safety in the workplace. The problem is that the Canada Labour Code covers only those employees who are working in industries or organizations that are subject to federal legislation. That is only a small part of the working population in Canada.

• (1850)

While we have an effective model in the Canada Labour Code, it does not cover the whole population of workers, most of whom are under provincial or territorial jurisdiction.

The difficulty with the idea of extending the federal model to include workers outside the federal jurisdiction is that constitutionally workplace safety is also a provincial concern. Any moves at the federal level to encroach on provincial or territorial legislative turf on workers' rights might not be viewed positively by those other levels of government. Amending the Criminal Code, for example, as the motion proposes, would clearly run into this roadblock.

We have to find an approach that would accommodate federal-provincial interests and that would also combine the educational and legislative approaches.

With respect to the question of studying the liability of corporate executives and directors, recommendation 73 of the province of Nova Scotia's public inquiry into the Westray disaster specifically recommended that the federal government, through the Department of Justice, institute a study of the accountability of corporate executives and directors. Although the member is well intended, the Westray report recommended that the Department of Justice review this.

I know this is a contentious area. I myself have a private member's bill which suggests that under the Canada Business Corporations Act directors be allowed the defence of due diligence in the conduct of their activities. Therefore, the issue does require further study, not by a parliamentary committee as proposed by the amendment to Motion No. 455, but instead by the Minister of Justice as recommended by the Westray inquiry report.

Thus, while I support the idea of a study I do not support the amendment.

[*Translation*]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** The time provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired and the order is dropped to the bottom of the order of precedence on the order paper.

**ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS**

[*English*]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

## FISHERIES

**Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Musquodoboit Valley—Eastern Shore, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today on an issue that should distress every single Canadian, especially those in British Columbia and those affected by the fishing industry.

Last week I asked the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans about the Pacific salmon treaty and, with the secret negotiations that he has ongoing with the Alaskans and the Americans, will it be in the best interest of British Columbians. His answer was, "Absolutely, absolutely, absolutely".

Indications are that the minister is not coming fully clean on this particular treaty, and here are the reasons.

The Minister of Fisheries and Oceans is negotiating a secret deal on the Pacific salmon treaty without consulting the major stakeholders in British Columbia, without the advice of the Government of British Columbia, without the advice of the Coastal Communities Network, without the advice of the UFAWU, without the advice of the environmental groups which have spent so much time and effort in conserving and protecting these very precious stocks.

The fact that this minister is in secret negotiations tells a lot of Canadians, especially British Columbians, that they should be very nervous. Not one single member of parliament on the Liberal government side or on the opposition side has been consulted on this treaty whatsoever.

The Coastal Communities Network has asked time and time again that before any treaty process is settled or signed there be open and transparent hearings, at least in committee, as to exactly what should be in the treaty.

The Minister of Fisheries and Oceans stated to a *Times* columnist in Victoria on May 29, just a few days ago: "I asked Dennis Streifel", who is the Minister of Fisheries for British Columbia, "for the provincial position back in January. I repeated that request 10 days ago and I am still waiting for it".

The Minister of Fisheries for British Columbia, Mr. Streifel, did indeed send the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans his response months ago and back on May 3 the Minister of Fisheries for British Columbia sent the federal fisheries minister copies and indications of exactly what the Government of British Columbia wants to see in this particular treaty. Again the federal Minister of Fisheries and

Oceans turned another blank eye and another deaf ear to the request.

• (1855)

The Coastal Communities Network has sent pages and pages of requests, documents and information that the government could use in its negotiations, which has been ignored and probably not even read.

It is an absolute outrage that the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans for Canada can turn around and make a secret deal that is so very vital to British Columbians and all Canadians. Salmon stocks on the west coast are a common property resource.

It is true that the federal government, along with the provincial government and many other stakeholders, have worked tirelessly over the last few years to preserve and protect those stocks. They certainly cannot stand around and allow the federal government to give away fish for fish.

One of the most important principles of previous treaties signed with the Americans, with Strangway and Ruckelshaus and all of those other deals, is the fact that British Columbian spawned fish belong first to British Columbia. When they come back they belong to British Columbia.

We seem to have a deal where the minister apparently will trade off one for one on the fish. That means the Alaskans will obtain more fish than British Columbians. That goes against the three treaties that were signed. It goes against the principle of equity. I ask the parliamentary secretary how he can stand in the House to defend that position when the minister is indicating that he will give away our fish stocks. I cannot wait for his answer.

**Mr. Wayne Easter (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the member opposite talked at the beginning of his remarks about distress. What is distressing is the kind of games that the B.C. government has been playing over this particular issue.

It is interesting that the member opposite talks about secrecy, yet he elaborates constantly on unfounded rumours. The time for rhetoric is past. That is why the minister is negotiating so intently. The time for rhetoric is past and the time for getting the job done is now. It is time to settle. It is time to negotiate a Pacific salmon treaty that builds for the future, in the interests of the fishery, the coastal communities, the province of B.C. and all of Canada.

Let us turn to the facts for a moment. The lack of agreement under the Pacific salmon treaty has been a concern for all those who care about salmon. We did not reach an agreement last year with Alaska. However, interim agreements with the state of Washington in 1998 resulted in a 75% reduction of their harvest of our threatened Thompson River coho. Clearly, co-operation with the United States is a crucial issue to ensure a future for the salmon resource.

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Canada's goal has been to take our domestic approach to put the fish first and translate it into new arrangements under the Pacific salmon treaty.

The minister is encouraged to report that the talks are proceeding well. They are being conducted on a government-to-government basis, as recommended by the special advisers. In these discussions we have been guided by three objectives. First, to adopt more effective conservation regimes that put the needs of fish first. Second, to restrict the interception of Canadian bound salmon and move fish to Canada. Three, to secure improved bilateral co-operation on science and salmon management.

### CORRECTIONAL SERVICE CANADA

**Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC):** Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to have an opportunity to address again an issue that should come as a real shock to most Canadians.

The Liberal government, through Canada's Corrections and Conditional Release Act, through the CSC, has this insidious plan that it wants to release 50% of the inmate population by the year 2000.

We have been looking at this issue at the justice committee. We had the privilege of having the CSC commissioner, Ole Ingstrup, bless us with his presence the other day. He still denies that this is even a fact.

This is absolutely shocking. This is a malodorous plan that was hoisted upon an unsuspecting public some time ago. If this is allowed to happen, once again the Canadian public will be affected by this. It will be an absolute disgrace if this is allowed to happen.

We know that there have been internal memos circulated by CSC officials setting out specifically that there are targets. The unfortunate language used was that there are numerical goals, balanced distribution, a reintegration agenda, plan or process, achievable numbers, release objectives, equalization between institution and community population, and agreed upon goals. They are very careful never to use the word quotas, though, but we do know that a quota is a quota is a quota.

• (1900)

Nowhere in the Corrections and Conditional Release Act does it ever talk about numerical goals, targets or redistribution. Yet this is the type of language that very clearly sets out this insidious plan.

The commissioner was very reluctant to admit that this has happened. Yet it is very clear that there was a plan to open the doors of the jails and let 50% of the inmate population back out on to the street without following the proper process that is put in place to determine the criteria as to whether inmates should be released.

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Another very disturbing point about it is that it is completely contrary to law. There is no acknowledgement whatsoever that it is even happening, although in fact this documentation clearly shows that there has been directions given to corrections and conditional release officials. There is obviously a disincentive for wardens not to follow the directives which have come from deputy commissioners such as Brendan Reynolds in Ontario.

There are even specific numbers referenced for the province of Ontario: 660 inmates are to be released by December 31, 1999. It is absolutely unbelievable that this could be going on at a time when our law enforcement community is working harder and harder with less resources, at a time when the public confidence is perhaps at an all time low in our justice system. Yet this plan is hatched in a very secretive way.

When confronted with irrefutable evidence that these statistics are referenced in internal documents, the commissioner simply says unfortunate language was used. There is a complete denial on behalf of the solicitor general's department that it was even happening.

Although their knuckles have been rapped and this has been exposed for what it was, which is an absolute sham, the government is now saying it never happened and that it was not in place at all. I suspect the government will slink away with its tail between its legs and simply proceed in perhaps some other fashion.

This is an extremely dangerous initiative. What has taken place should come as a great shock to anybody who is working currently in corrections.

There is absolutely no doubt that this plan was afoot. The parliamentary secretary to the solicitor general will rise shortly and tell us that it was not happening. We know it was happening. Thankfully, through the diligence of the opposition, we have exposed it. Through the diligence of Ontario victims services, it has been exposed for what it was. We hope it will be changed. We do not want to see it proceeding any further.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Jacques Saada (Parliamentary Secretary to Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my colleague referred to things that he called distressing.

What I found particularly distressing is seeing that my colleague, who got the answers he was seeking from all those he put the questions to, is back in the House today putting the same questions, because what interests him is not the content of the response, but rather the show he wants to put on in the House.

He has put his question to the current solicitor general and his predecessor. He has put his question to the commissioner of correctional services and to me as parliamentary secretary. Everyone gave him the same answer.

Everyone tried to explain to him, and I will do so again, not for him, because he does not need it, but for the public—

**An hon. member:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Jacques Saada:** —if he allows me to speak.

For the public, I would explain just what is happening.

At the moment, considerable effort, and this is recognized by the auditor general in his report, is going into improving the way inmates to be paroled will be reintegrated into society. All this effort is based on very solid programs, which are science based. The programs are not extemporaneous.

The commissioner of correctional services referred to 16 criteria that ought to be used to evaluate the way inmates will be paroled and so on.

There are no quotas. There have never been quotas. There will never be quotas. All that for one very simple reason: what counts first and foremost is not the quota figures, but public safety. He does not have exclusive prerogative on public safety.

• (1905 )

[*English*]

## THE ENVIRONMENT

**Mr. Lynn Myers (Waterloo—Wellington, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on April 23, the day after Earth Day, I asked the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment a question about government initiatives to keep the earth a healthy place for all to live.

Over 100 years ago the idea of protecting the environment simply did not exist. Technology was advancing rapidly and North American factories were booming. We did not know to what extent we were harming the environment, the ozone layers, the water and the wildlife. We now know that such careless activity can ruin our beautiful planet.

Our thinking patterns have evolved considerably in the last century in various fields including the environment, but we still need to go further. With the new millennium around the corner we must continue to think seriously about this important issue. This is obviously very important for future generations.

Canadians think this is an important issue. I do as well. I think all members do. As the Minister of the Environment indicated in an interview recently, polls suggested over 90% of Canadians are concerned enough about the environment to do something economically to change it or to change their lifestyles to better the situation.

The environment is still a top of the mind issue for Canadians. I would argue that it is or should be top of the mind around the world. Canadians and other global citizens want, need and expect a strong commitment to environmental protection.

*Adjournment Debate*

Many studies have shown that our health is directly linked to the quality of our water, our soil and our air. We must work hard to ensure that these resources stay clean for all humans. Canada already has a great reputation for being a leading country when it comes to the environment. We are known across the world as producers of safe, healthy and nutritious food. Our collective care about the safety of our food has made Canada among the safest producers in the world. We must continue to improve and modernize the methods we use.

Furthermore, Canada has a large portion of the world's freshwater. We work hard to keep this water clean, but once again we must continue to advance these efforts to ensure that our lakes and rivers can continue to be used by our children and generations to follow.

Government must take action in this area. We know the environment is very precious to all. It is a necessity for human life. Too many species now reach extinction every day. Too much air, water and soil is being polluted. Although Canada is one of the world's leaders in this area we need to continue to work hard at saving and protecting the environment.

Furthermore, our government must work to involve other countries in the struggle to save the earth. The world sees Canada as a protector of human rights and a leader in finding solutions to problems affecting other lives. We need to use this kind of approach in the environmental area again.

I ask the parliamentary secretary to take this opportunity to explain to all of us what the government is doing to ensure that the earth's environment is being protected, especially as it relates to water. What is Canada doing and what will we continue to do to make sure the earth will remain a beautiful, clean and healthy place for all of us to live?

**Mr. Wayne Easter (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, freshwater is an essential element of the planet's life support system and one that we cannot take for granted.

The member for Waterloo—Wellington and all Canadians are concerned about the long term security of freshwater. They want governments to act, to conserve and to protect this precious resource. As the member knows, the government is acting to protect this precious resource.

On February 10 the government announced its strategy to prohibit bulk removals of freshwater, including removals for the purpose of export from all major drainage basins in Canada.

The strategy respects the primary responsibility of the provinces for freshwater management and the ecological integrity of drainage basins. It is consistent with our international trade obligations. The strategy lays the groundwork for Canada-wide protection of its freshwater resources. Progress on that federal strategy has been significant.

Canadians can be reassured that the federal Minister of the Environment is working diligently with her provincial and territorial colleagues to achieve a Canada-wide prohibition of bulk water removals from the major drainage basins in Canada.

As the hon. member for Waterloo—Wellington noted, ground water is a very important issue for Canadians and the government. Provinces are responsible for the management and protection of ground water. The federal government is committed to working with all provinces and territories to protect all waters in a comprehensive way.

• (1910)

In addition, I inform the hon. member that the federal government continues to focus its efforts on contamination research and pollution mitigation.

## TRADE

**Mr. Bill Graham (Toronto Centre—Rosedale, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, some time ago I asked the Minister for International Trade what he would be doing to consult Canadians concerning the upcoming World Trade Organization negotiations that will be taking place in Seattle some time in November of this year.

At that time he responded that he would be asking the foreign affairs and international trade committee to conduct a study in Canada to report to parliament concerning this and to report to him so that he would be in a better position to prepare Canada's negotiating position in respect of these important negotiations.

These negotiations will be important. Canada is a very open economy. It is a trading nation unlike many others. Something like 40% of our GDP is dependent on exports and something like over 30% is dependent upon imports. In some ways we are 70% dependent on trade in one way or another. Canadians are very knowledgeable in this area.

In the course of its travels across the country the committee had the opportunity to consult Canadians from all walks of life in such diverse areas as agriculture and the agri-food business with all its complexities and differences from different products that are sold and now manufactured into important exports, to the issue of tariffs and industry access in other countries and how we deal with our trading partners, to the new agenda that is there in trade and the problems in intellectual property. We have found in the course of those consultations that there is an extraordinary degree of expertise because Canadians are deeply involved in this area.

In addition, Canadians shared with us and with the committee their concerns about what is happening in the world trading situation. They shared with us their concerns that if trade is allowed to continue in a way where issues involving the environment, human rights, labour standards, or the guarantees of the diversity of

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culture are not addressed, there would be a real problem in the world. We would not be able to have a responsive trading system which would meet the needs of Canadians. As I said, they are aware of these issues. They are also aware that in many areas they are able to make a real contribution to these negotiations.

The minister is determined to consult Canadians, either through the committee process, through the SAGIT or through the important consultations with the provinces. I encourage the ministry to continue in this area to make information available, whether through the Internet or through traditional means, and to encourage the import of knowledgeable Canadians.

I appreciate if the parliamentary secretary would inform the House tonight on any other additional initiatives the minister intends to put into place to ensure that when we go into the negotiations in Seattle at the end of this year our negotiators are fully apprised of the rich diversity and important opinion we have available in the country.

**Mr. Wayne Easter (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we welcome the remarks of the member for Toronto Centre—Rosedale. He can be assured that the minister in his capacity as chairman will be creating a considerable amount of work for the member for Toronto Centre—Rosedale.

I congratulate the member on his committee's work in the past. He has done his utmost to involve Canadians and to seek their advice. The minister certainly wants to encourage his continuing to do that in the future.

On March 12 it was stated in the House that the Government of Canada placed the utmost importance on public consultations. In Seattle later this year the 135 members of the World Trade Organization will launch another round of trade negotiations. At a minimum it will address the agriculture and service sectors. These are sectors are very important to the Canadian economy.

To prepare for this round, the government believes it is important to hear from civil society: Canadians, non-government organizations, business and industry groups as well as the provinces.

• (1915)

Consultations are well underway. Two of our standing committees are involved. The Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food has held consultations with agricultural groups. The Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade has received many submissions and has held cross-country hearings.

On February 8 the Minister for International Trade launched the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade consulta-

tions. A notice was published in the *Canada Gazette* calling for submissions from Canadians. The department's website, [www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca](http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca), also provides information on the next round of negotiations.

In addition, on February 17—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** I am sorry but time has expired.

## CANADIAN ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION ACT

**Mr. Rick Laliberte (Churchill River, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, on May 11 I asked the environment minister to explain why the Canadian Environment Protection Act amendments proposed by the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Environment and Sustainable Development were being stripped.

I asked the minister to explain why the strong CEPA was being rejected by the Liberal cabinet after one of the lengthiest parliamentary reviews in history, a review that provided a rare opportunity to improve the environmental standards that protect the Canadian public and our environment.

The Canadian Environmental Protection Act, Bill C-32, provides the cornerstone for environmental protection in Canada. The legislation covers toxic substances, air and water pollution, biotechnology, ocean dumping, hazardous wastes, fuel standards, public participation, regulatory enforcement and other environmental matters.

The link between the environment and human health are well proven. The chemical contamination of our air, water and lands are the legacy from the past century. This parliamentary review was a chance to learn from the mistakes of this century and begin the next century with an improved protection law for Canadians.

Throughout the committee proceedings, environment and health groups presented irrefutable evidence and testimony that the legislation offered little, if any, protection for the environment and health of the country.

Point by point and clause by clause, improvements were made to the legislation. Committee members from the New Democratic Party, the Bloc Quebecois, the Progressive Conservatives and some Liberal members initiated a comprehensive non-partisan effort to strengthen the environmental standards in Canada.

The bill, as amended by committee, presented an improvement in standards for our children and future generations. It is unfortunate that these democratic recommendations have been rejected by the Liberal cabinet and the Reform Party.

Under intense pressure from the industry lobbyists many improvements made to improve the Canadian Environmental Protection Act were reversed. A series of motions endorsed by industry

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lobbyists and proposed by the Liberal Party and the Reform Party removed virtually every committee improvement to the original legislation, including the following points that could have ensured environmental protection for this and future generations.

The first point was the loss of the phase-out consideration. A motion endorsed by the committee called for the phase out, the total elimination of the most persistent and bioaccumulative substances known to man. As of today, the total elimination of these chemicals will not be required in Canada. Only the virtual elimination of toxics substances is offered.

On Monday, I asked the Prime Minister why he, like environmental protection, was becoming a virtual Prime Minister. Virtual is not appreciated.

The second point was that Canadians had lost the basic essence of the precautionary principle. Before measures to protect the environment or human health can be taken, they must be proven to be cost effective. Strings are attached. For example, it was not cost effective to move sick children from living beside a toxic site in Sydney, Nova Scotia until toxic ooze entered their homes. It is not cost effective to clean up millions of tonnes of radioactive waste from leaking into Canada's fourth largest freshwater lake, the Great Bear Lake.

As the Liberal government promises Canadians that water quality is important, its actions say otherwise. It has watered down the environmental standards in Canada.

At a time when Canadians are increasingly concerned about biotechnology and asking for more information and transparency, the Liberal government has passed into law that decisions on biotechnology environment and health risks must be decided by the Liberal cabinet behind closed doors.

• (1920 )

As I asked the environment minister, why does the industry wish list come first before children's health?

**Mr. Wayne Easter (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is

the industry wish list does not come first. Children's health comes first. Let us get some facts straight about what Bill C-32 really does.

Bill C-32 is on the leading edge of environmental protection legislation worldwide. It focuses on pollution prevention, which is the most effective means of protecting our environment and the health of Canadians including our children.

Bill C-32 strengthens the Canadian Environmental Protection Act. It enhances our authority to take action to protect the environment and human health. Our ability to go after polluters will be strengthened. The bill puts the environment and the health of Canadians first by requiring that we follow the precautionary principle.

Bill C-32 demands that the government examine all 23,000 substances in Canada to assess the risks they pose to the environment and to the health of Canadians including children. The bill places new deadlines for taking action where we identify concerns. It provides us with the authority to virtually eliminate the most dangerous toxic substances.

The member is aware that hormone disrupting substances are an emerging concern for the health of Canadians. Bill C-32 is the only legislation in the world that requires that research be done on those substances. This research will provide the Minister of the Environment and the Minister of Health with the information needed to take action to protect our children.

Bill C-32 is a win for the environment, a win for the Canadian public and a win for the health of Canadians including our children. The member opposite should be applauding this leading legislation.

[*Translation*]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 7.22 p.m.)





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