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OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Thursday, February 8, 2007

—

Speaker: The Honourable Peter Milliken

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, February 8, 2007

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

●(1000)
[English]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Mr. Norman Doyle (St. John's East, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 10th report of the standing committee, entitled “Issues raised by the use of security certificates under the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act”.

* * *

INCOME TAX ACT

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis (Winnipeg North, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-399, An Act to amend the Income Tax Act (mutual fund trust accounting principles).

She said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to introduce this bill, which amends subsection 132(6) of the Income Tax Act to improve the transparency of mutual fund trust accounting rules.

This amendment would result in improved transparency for those investing or considering investing in income trusts by requiring a clear differentiation between income made on capital investments and the return of capital on all financial reporting, a distinction currently not required.

This lack of a distinction has been cited by regulators and others as a cause for concern that seniors and other investors may be misled as to the value of their investment. Protecting seniors and all Canadian consumers remains our primary objective, and this bill goes a considerable distance in achieving that.

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

* * *

[Translation]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Michel Guimond (Montmorency—Charlevoix—Haute-Côte-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, there have been discussions among

all parties and I believe you would find unanimous consent for the following motion:

That, at the conclusion of today's debate on the opposition motion in the name of the member for Laurier—Sainte-Marie, all questions necessary to dispose of the motion be deemed put and a recorded division deemed requested and deferred until Tuesday, February 13, 2007, at the expiry of the time provided for government orders.

The Speaker: Does the hon. whip of the Bloc Québécois have the unanimous consent of the House to propose this motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

* * *

[English]

PETITIONS

AUTISM

Hon. Shawn Murphy (Charlottetown, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present in the House today a petition from a number of concerned constituents from my riding of Charlottetown dealing with the whole issue of autism and how it is presently being funded in all provinces across Canada.

The petitioners call upon the government to provide funding under the Canada Health Act for IBI/ABA treatment, and furthermore the petition goes on to call upon the government to establish an academic chair in each of our 10 provinces so that IBI/ABA treatment can be taught at the undergraduate and doctorate level in each of these universities.

●(1005)

RIGHTS OF THE UNBORN

Mr. Leon Benoit (Vegreville—Wainwright, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present, on behalf of my constituents today, a petition dealing with the issue of protecting unborn children who are victims of violent crime.

In 2005 Olivia Talbot of Edmonton was killed and her 27-week-old unborn son, Lane Jr., also died as a result of that attack.

Speaker's Ruling

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

UNDOCUMENTED WORKERS

Mr. Mario Silva (Davenport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition on the whole issue of undocumented workers, asking the government to take action on this very critical issue.

Today I met with Michael Atkinson from the Canadian Construction Association, and Mr. Atkinson was reporting to me, as he has mentioned to the minister as well, about the critical shortage of workers in the construction sector, particularly given that the average age of construction workers is about 55.

There is a need for about 150,000 people to come into Canada within the next eight years just to fill in the present shortage of retiring workers, so this is a very important issue also for the Canadian economy, which I have mentioned many times. The government has to take action or else it will be damaging our economy.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

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

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

[Translation]

POINT OF ORDER

KYOTO PROTOCOL IMPLEMENTATION ACT—SPEAKER'S RULING

The Speaker: On February 2, 2007, prior to debate on report stage of Bill C-288, An Act to ensure that Canada meets its global climate change obligations under the Kyoto Protocol, a point of order was raised by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Government House Leader and Minister for Democratic Reform .

He said that amendments to this bill reported by the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development on December 8, 2006 required a royal recommendation. Interventions were also made by the hon. members for Don Valley West, Wascana, Honoré-Mercier, Cambridge and Mississauga South.

The Chair thanks all the hon. members for having addressed this matter.

[English]

In his submission, the parliamentary secretary referred to my ruling of September 27, 2006 where I concluded that Bill C-288, as it was introduced in the House, did not require a royal recommendation. He did not dispute this decision, but argued that two amendments adopted by the standing committee created a new and distinct purpose which involved new spending, and that

comments by the sponsor of the bill in a CBC interview confirmed the fact that significant new spending would result from the adoption of the bill.

The Chair has examined the two amendments reported by the committee. The first one modifies clause 5 of the bill. That clause requires the minister to prepare a climate change plan and lists measures to be taken to ensure that Canada meets its Kyoto obligations. The amendment adopted by the committee adds a provision to the list of measures regarding transitions for affected workers. It results in an additional element that the minister must address in the climate change plan.

As I mentioned in my September 27, 2006 ruling, the measures which this bill obliges the minister to bring forward may or may not entail spending. The Chair cannot speculate on what those measures may be, for they are not contained in this bill. Therefore, the amendment does not require a royal recommendation because it does not contain any authorization for spending; it merely directs the minister as to what should be addressed in the plan.

[Translation]

The second amendment modifies clause 10. That clause deals with the review of the Minister's Climate Change Plan. The amendment gives the National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy the responsibility of analyzing the plan and advising the minister. The Parliamentary Secretary argues that this is a new and distinct purpose for the National Round Table which will involve new spending.

In examining the National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy Act, the Chair notes that section 4 establishes its mandate as follows:

... to play the role of catalyst in identifying, explaining and promoting, in all sectors of Canadian society and in all regions of Canada, principles and practices of sustainable development by

- (a) undertaking research and gathering information and analysis on critical issues of sustainable development;
- (b) advising governments on ways of integrating environmental and economic considerations into their decision-making processes and on global issues of sustainable development...

● (1010)

[English]

In determining whether a royal recommendation is needed for a new and distinct purpose, the Chair considers whether some entirely new activity or function is being proposed which radically diverges from the activities already authorized in existing legislation.

In the present case, section 4 of the act calls on the national round table to perform activities relating to an analysis of sustainable development issues and to advising the minister on environmental and economic considerations.

The terms of the amendment to Bill C-288 appear to me to fall precisely within its ongoing mandate: that is, to analyze the climate change plan and to advise the minister. Now it might be argued that this would increase the workload of the national round table, but even if this were so, an increase to its budget would be sought through existing appropriation arrangements.

In summary, then, on the arguments related to the text of the bill, as amended, I must conclude that the amendments to Bill C-288, adopted in the standing committee, do not constitute new spending for a new and distinct purpose, and the bill, as amended, does not require a royal recommendation.

[*Translation*]

Let me now deal with various ancillary points raised during interventions on Bill C-288.

The Parliamentary Secretary referred to the transcript of a CBC interview where the member for Honoré-Mercier alleged to have confirmed the fact that Bill C-288 would result in significant public expenditures. The hon. member for Honoré-Mercier disputes this interpretation.

The Chair is of the view that this is a matter of debate and not germane to the point of order itself.

[*English*]

Another matter was raised by the hon. member for Mississauga South. He asked how the House is formally informed that a bill, amended and reported from committee, requires a royal recommendation. The Chair would strongly encourage any member who has doubts in this regard to raise a point of order shortly after a committee has reported amendments to the House. In this manner, the Chair would be able to return with a decision in time for the appropriate action to be taken at report stage.

[*Translation*]

Once again, I thank the House for its assistance on these matters and its patience in permitting me to deal with this particular complex question.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*Translation*]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

OPPOSITION MOTION—KYOTO PROTOCOL

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ) moved:

That, having recognized the principle of complying with the Kyoto targets, it is the opinion of this House that the government should provide the Government of Quebec with the sum of \$328 million to enable it to implement its plan to meet the Kyoto protocol targets.

He said: Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois' position on implementing the Kyoto protocol has been known for a long time and is as follows.

First, Canada must meet its international commitments; second, a carbon exchange must be set up in Montreal, which requires strict reduction targets and a polluter-pay policy; third, the government must stop providing assistance for the oil industry; fourth, Canada must adopt a territorial approach; fifth, \$328 million must be transferred to the Government of Quebec.

For a number of years, Quebec has asked the federal government for \$328 million, to enable Quebec to implement the Kyoto protocol within its borders. This should have happened a long time ago. For

Business of Supply

too long, the Government of Quebec has been stalled by the federal government on this urgent, fundamental issue.

The Prime Minister and the Leader of the Official Opposition have both undermined Quebec's efforts to fight climate change. In so doing, they have raised considerable doubt as to how determined they actually are to comply with Kyoto. By imposing its policies on Quebec, the Conservative government is doing what the former Liberal government did: hampering economic development in Quebec.

What this House needs to understand is that when it comes to energy, Quebec and Canada are two nations faced with completely different challenges. Although oil is making Canada richer, it is making Quebec poorer.

Last Sunday, a former federal environment minister, Mr. Anderson, stated that the Bloc Québécois was the only party that had always consistently supported the Kyoto protocol. In fact, this fundamental issue has long been a high priority for us. We do not have to make the shift to green thinking.

During the 2000 election campaign, we were already making the fight against climate change a key issue. In the years that followed, Quebec made a huge effort to convince Canada to ratify the Kyoto protocol.

The Bloc spoke out about this issue and was successful. During the 2004 election, we made the environment, and particularly the implementation of the Kyoto protocol, a central focus of our election platform. Greenpeace even awarded us a symbolic windmill for our campaign.

Furthermore, during the course of the 2004 election, something occurred that is very rare in the annals of politics. We received the support of another party leader, the Green Party. At the time, he called on Quebecers to vote for the Bloc.

During the last campaign, our platform focused once again on the climate change issue.

Lastly, following the election of the current Conservative government, with a Prime Minister who promised to tear up the Kyoto protocol, we lead the charge in Quebec. We launched a petition, calling for compliance with Kyoto, and gathered more than 120,000 signatures.

We obtained the support of the majority of this House in favour of a motion calling on Canada to honour its commitments. It must be understood that this issue was crucial in Quebec.

I must point out here the complicit silence of the Conservatives elected in Quebec regarding this matter. They dishonourably refused to represent the opinion of a large majority of Quebecers.

Furthermore, I am not at all convinced of the Prime Minister's good will, since not that long ago, he was the one who called Kyoto nothing more than a socialist scheme.

Business of Supply

If there was a scheme, it was more likely an oil and gas scheme, reaching from Houston to Calgary, via Washington. I, however, do not believe in conspiracy theories. In fact, Quebec must simply deal with the Conservatives' ideological stubbornness and the Liberals' hypocrisy.

We cannot emphasize enough how appalling the Prime Minister's actions were in this matter.

• (1015)

Not only did he describe the international protocol as a “socialist plot”, but when he was leader of the official opposition he also promised to revoke it at the first possible opportunity.

The Prime Minister is fond of presenting himself as a decisive leader. Tuesday he spoke of leadership and yes, there is leadership, but the problem is that he is leading in the wrong direction. He has reneged on Canada's international commitments. He put a gag on Quebec in Kenya. His Quebec political lieutenant has slammed the door in Quebec's face as far as the \$328 million is concerned, and the present Minister of the Environment has said, in response to a question from the Bloc, that he still wishes to proceed on a project by project basis, on a piecemeal basis, just like his predecessor and just like the former Liberal minister.

I am, of course, referring to the present leader of the official opposition. When he was the environment minister, he too hindered Quebec in its efforts. When Quebec was trying to negotiate an agreement with him, the then Quebec Minister of the Environment, Minister Mulcair, a fervent federalist, had this to say: “the term contempt is not strong enough to describe how I was treated.” Nothing has changed since then.

It is all very well for the current Quebec Minister of the Environment, Mr. Béchard, to be pleased with his first meeting with his new federal counterpart, but all he is doing is repeating what he said after his first meeting with the old one. We all know what happened after that: this Conservative government humiliated Mr. Béchard in Nairobi.

Mr. Mulcair, who had never caved in to Ottawa, stated, and rightly so, that the federal government's focus was totally on the west and on Ontario. That is why the Bloc Québécois is demanding a Kyoto implementation plan based on a territorial approach. This is the approach which has enabled 25 sovereign states of Europe to reach agreement and make some progress within the European Union.

That approach will enable Canada to meet its commitments by allocating objectives to Quebec and to each province. Quebec will then be free to determine for itself the best way to meet its objectives. If the government wants to demonstrate its goodwill and to take that path, the first step it needs to take is to transfer \$328 million to the Government of Quebec, with no strings attached and not a little at a time.

Quebeckers are committed to combating climate change. They have been making that clear for many years. Petroleum is the source of 71% of total greenhouse gas emissions in Quebec. This means that Quebec will have to radically reduce its petroleum consumption in order to help combat climate change. That is the first reason for Quebec to reduce its reliance on petroleum. It seems to me that saving the planet is an excellent reason.

The second reason is that petroleum makes Quebec poorer. This is not true for Canada. In today's petroleum economy, Canada is a major player. The Canadian economy is heavily reliant on the petroleum industry. This is so true that the fluctuations in the value of the Canadian dollar depend in large part on petroleum prices. This is largely why Canada has yet to implement the Kyoto protocol. Put simply, petroleum is making Canada richer. The opposite is true for Quebec: petroleum is making it poorer.

That is why Quebec needs to enter into an agreement based on the territorial approach. With such an agreement, Quebec will be able to take charge of implementing the Kyoto protocol within its jurisdiction, including where funding is concerned. This will require a minimum of \$328 million to be transferred to the Quebec government.

When I say that petroleum makes Quebec poorer, that is not a figure of speech. For one thing, Quebec does not produce significant amounts of petroleum, natural gas or coal. In 2006, Quebec bought \$13 billion worth of petroleum. This represents a \$7 billion increase over three years. Over the same three years, Quebec went from a surplus to a trade deficit of \$7 billion.

• (1020)

This means that rising oil prices sent Quebec into a trade deficit position. As you know, trade deficits slow economic growth. Every drop in the balance of trade leads to a drop in wealth in Quebec.

As well, the instability of prices and the dollar hits the manufacturing industry. The Quebec finance department estimates that a 20% increase in the price of oil results in a 0.8% drop in real GDP in the first year and 1.4% in the second. That is a huge amount.

The price of oil is supposed to remain high and very probably to go even higher in the short term. That is why I say that oil is making Quebec poor. And that is why it will make Quebec poorer in future, if the federal government persists in countering its efforts.

This is the second justification for adopting a strategy that focuses on reducing our dependence on oil, a strategy that is appropriate for Quebec.

We therefore have strong evidence: Quebec must reduce its dependence on oil, both to combat climate change and to halt the impoverishment that results from our dependence.

There is also a third reason. Quebec, like all societies, will eventually have to do without oil. Oil is a non-renewable resource that will someday be exhausted. If we embark on this path quickly, the reduction in dependence on oil will become a major economic advantage.

The time will necessarily come when oil production is no longer sufficient to meet demand. That will cause shortages and lead to skyrocketing prices. Will this happen in 20 years, or in 50 years? While we do not know the answer, everyone acknowledges that it will happen.

Business of Supply

The industrialized world will enter the post-oil era in a few decades. This new direction will call for very far-reaching changes. In fact, it will call for a revolution—an energy revolution. Societies that saw the change coming and embarked on the new path earlier will come out of it as winners. Societies that did not prepare for it will experience a major crisis.

It is therefore entirely to Quebec's advantage to embark on the new path of the 21st century now. But Quebec will never be able to do this if Canada continues to impose its oil economy policies on it.

From 1970 to 1999, the federal government gave \$66 billion in direct subsidies to the oil and gas industry, all concentrated outside Quebec. Quebeckers paid for one quarter of those subsidies. Not a single cent was given to the Quebec hydro-electric industry. And it goes on: by our calculations, the accelerated write-off allowed for the oil sands alone will have let the oil companies exempt \$15 billion of their taxable profits between 2005 and 2008—\$15 billion to the oil companies, when we all know that they are all living on the edge of poverty.

On Tuesday, the Prime Minister announced his intention to transform the savings made on debt servicing into income tax reductions. Should he not be taking that same approach and cutting the assistance given to the oil companies, and spending that money to combat climate change?

As for the leader of the official opposition, he is not missing a trick; he also voted in favour of Bill C-48, legislation that meant that Canada's tax laws became the most favourable for oil companies in North America. The oil companies now pay less tax in the Prime Minister's Canada than in George W. Bush's Texas. We have to do it. Enough.

The Bloc has a strategy that will enable Quebec to reduce its oil dependency. By applying this strategy, Quebec could expect to reduce its oil consumption by 32% over 10 years. In reducing the flight of capital caused by oil imports, these measures could lead to an increase in GDP of 1.5% per year in Quebec.

In addition, reduced oil dependency will improve the competitive strength of the Quebec economy. We are talking here about tremendous impacts that will make the difference between an economy with modest growth and a dynamic and flourishing economy.

•(1025)

Quebec's regions will also benefit from this strategy. For example, the use of forest and farm wastes to produce clean fuels, the implementation of the Quebec marine policy and coastal shipping, modernization of plants in the forestry sector, and reduction of oil-related expenditures are all measures that will benefit the economies of Quebec's regions. Finally, the positioning of Quebec as a player in sectors likely to grow quickly should also ensure continued and sustainable growth for the province.

Over the next 10 years, in meeting these objectives, Quebec will have been able to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 21.5%, which will be 10% less than 1990 levels; and that will only be the start, because Quebeckers believe in Kyoto.

For this government and the previous one, Canada's economic future has always meant more oil. For us, it is exactly the opposite. The future of Quebec always demands less oil. Thus, the future of Quebec and the future of our planet are going in the same direction. Quebec will need all its resources to finance this strategy, but much of Quebec's financial resources are sent here, to Ottawa.

It is also in Ottawa that crucial decisions are made with regard to research, and to marine and railway transportation. Decisions are made in Ottawa with respect to certain industrial standards, the regulation of polluting emissions and vehicle compliance, decisions on implementation of the Kyoto protocol, creation of a carbon market, for example, and decisions about business support programs, taxation and many infrastructure programs. All those decisions are made in Ottawa.

It is obvious that Quebec will not be able to achieve all these objectives without the good will of the federal government. However, within the federal framework, past experience teaches us that Quebec must be very patient before Ottawa agrees to respond to its needs and interests.

Therefore, I invite Quebeckers to take note that there would be nothing to prevent a sovereign Quebec from implementing an energy revolution that will serve our interests and those of the planet.

•(1030)

Mr. Paul Crête: Mr. Speaker, may I clarify something? Have we resumed debate or is this questions and comments period?

The Deputy Speaker: I asked if there were any questions and comments and nobody rose so we are resuming debate. The Hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and Minister for La Francophonie and Official Languages has the floor.

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and Minister for la Francophonie and Official Languages, CPC): Mr. Speaker, why do we need the clean air act when we have the Canadian Environmental Protection Act?

Canadians are concerned about the quality of the air they are breathing, as well as climate change. Harmful atmospheric emissions are continuing to impact on our health, our environment, our economy and even our quality of life. Our government is aware that global warming is a serious threat to the health and well-being of Canada. So the new government of Canada has taken measures designed to reduce air pollution and climate change in order to protect Canadians' health and their environment.

The report by the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, which has just been released, once again sounds the alarm. Growing levels of greenhouse gas emissions in the atmosphere may exacerbate climate change, and this may prove to be devastating in many parts of the world.

Business of Supply

This government's long-term integrated regulatory approach to the reduction of air pollutants and greenhouse gas emissions will be strengthened by the improvements that the bill aims to make to the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999, or CEPA. By relying on the considerable powers already provided under CEPA, Bill C-30 will ensure a much firmer foundation for concerted action to be taken against smog emissions, acid rain pollutants and greenhouse gas emissions produced in many cases by the same industrial and vehicle sources.

Concerted action will make it possible to avoid so-called "pernicious" effects. Sometimes the technologies used to reduce air pollution have unfortunate side effects, which actually increase greenhouse gas emissions. By tackling this problem, our government will maximize the advantages for the population of Canada and Quebec. Our approach will also provide the certainty necessary to industry so that it can make the most of technology and invest the necessary money to reduce both air pollutants and greenhouse gases.

The previous government committed itself to meeting ambitious greenhouse gas reduction targets, but the emissions increased by 27% during its mandate. Consequently there was an increase in smog in our cities and an increase in the incidence of asthma and other respiratory diseases. That is why our government is taking a dynamic new path.

The clean air act creates new powers to allow for regulation and surveillance of air pollutants and greenhouse gas emissions.

Allow me to give a few examples of the effects the changes to CEPA will have.

The clean air act will be the legislative basis for a made-to-measure approach to regulate indoor and outdoor air pollutants as well as greenhouse gases. By adopting regulations based on the act, we will be in a position to impose requirements and to take enforcement measures against offenders.

Our clean air regulation initiative comes as a radical change if we consider all the missed opportunities of the past. For the first time, the environment and health ministers will be legally forced to establish national objectives on air quality, to follow closely the progress in meeting those objectives and to produce a progress report every year. This is a very strict obligation that we think will ensure that successive governments make a priority of improving air quality.

With the clean air act, Canadians will be in a position to hold the government accountable for real progress in reducing air pollution.

• (1035)

Bill C-30 will also amend CEPA to enable us to make full use of the emission-trading market so that industry can comply as efficiently as possible with the regulatory standards that are going to be instituted.

The bill will also improve our ability to regulate air emissions from various products.

Along with the provinces and territories, our government promised to require that the renewable fuel usage rate be set at 5% by 2010. This objective is stricter than the American one and

comparable to that of our European partners. The amendments to CEPA will allow us to regulate the fuel mix and thereby institute national standards on renewable fuel content in as efficient a way as possible.

Canada's Clean Air Act will also improve the Energy Efficiency Act, enabling us to set solid energy efficiency standards for a broader array of consumer and commercial products, especially household appliances and electrical products.

Finally, Canada's Clean Air Act will amend the Motor Vehicle Fuel Consumption Standards Act to modernize the government's ability to regulate the fuel consumption of new motor vehicles. For the very first time, we will be able to regulate the fuel efficiency of motor vehicles beginning in the 2011 model year.

We already have some legislative power to protect Canadians' health and the environment from air pollution. That is why we do not expect the amendments to unleash new regulatory measures. The notice of intent we issued last October described a certain number of regulations that will come into force over the next 12 months under the existing legislation.

Canadians will see real reductions thanks to these regulations imposing mandatory requirements. The era of voluntary compliance is over.

In conclusion, Canada's Clean Air Act will be the first comprehensive, integrated effort that Canada has seen to fight air pollution and greenhouse gases. It will give all Canadians cleaner air while also fighting climate change. Our health has suffered long enough and our environment has been degraded enough. Canada's Clean Air Act is absolutely necessary to achieve real progress for our generation and those to come.

Mr. Speaker, I am sharing my time with the parliamentary secretary to the Minister of the Environment.

• (1040)

[English]

The Deputy Speaker: I might just say to the hon. member that it is important for people to indicate at the beginning or even in the middle of their speech that they will be sharing their time and when members are getting notes indicating that, they should pay attention to the notes and they ought to tell the House that they are sharing their time. To do it at the end of their speech is not in keeping with the rules. However, we will cut the member a little bit of slack this time and we will go to questions and comments.

Business of Supply

Hon. Stephen Owen (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is passing curious to me that we are hearing from the Conservative government the constant harping about the fact that under the Liberal government for a number of years greenhouse gas emissions were actually increasing. It is curious because, during that whole period when numerous projects were being put into place and being funded into the future, projects that had real support from Canadians across the country, the scientific and environmental communities, that while they had not had a chance to get themselves working, the Conservatives, as opposition and then as government, were disclaiming the whole basis of climate change. They were deniers.

For them to now say that we did nothing and that they are rushing in to save the day and that under the Liberals it was terrible, they were not even in the field. They were saying that it did not happen, that it was not happening, that it was not a danger and that it was a waste.

Would the hon. member simply comment on what on earth the Conservatives were thinking for those long 13 years when they were denying the whole existence of a problem that they now claim they must rush in and save us from? It is very curious.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: Mr. Speaker, we must deal with the basics, with the real problems. For 13 years, the Liberals had the opportunity to do so and they did nothing. If this had been so good and so effective, emissions would have gone down instead of going up.

Now, we must deal with the problems. The voluntary part must come to an end. As a government, we must stand up. All people in Canada and in Quebec must be informed of what we are doing and the way we are doing it. Thus, it will be crystal clear.

Clean air will be not only for everyone, for oil industries, but also for ordinary people. Asthma and respiratory diseases are more and more frequent in this country. We are dealing with the real problems. This is how we will work.

Mr. Thierry St-Cyr (Jeanne-Le Ber, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to put a question to my colleague from Beauport—Limoilou. She talked a lot about the various measures taken by the government, but she did not talk about today's motion, which asks to provide the Government of Quebec with the sum of \$328 million to implement its plan in Quebec.

I remind her that it is not only the Bloc Québécois that is asking for this. Of course, there is the Parti Québécois, but there is also the Government of Quebec, with Mr. Jean Charest's Liberal Party in Quebec. In fact, everyone in Quebec is asking for this \$328 million.

I would like to know whether, as an elected member from Quebec, she will vote in favour of our motion. If she does not intend to vote in favour of the motion, I would like her to say whom she represents here, in this House.

• (1045)

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: Mr. Speaker, in answer to my Bloc colleague, I would say that I represent Quebeckers and I am working in Quebec for Quebeckers, but I am also in Canada. I am working for everyone. Quebeckers are not the only ones with problems. Both

Quebeckers and Canadians have problems. In that sense, the clean air act, Bill C-30, is a very good bill.

An hon. member: Will you vote for the motion?

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: You will see when the time comes.

As to the matter the member alluded to, the environment ministers meet frequently. They have a very good relationship with Quebec. Mr. Béchard had a very good meeting with Mr. Baird. Now it is up to them to decide what to do.

[*English*]

Mr. Mark Warawa (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her comments and her hard work in representing Quebec well.

I would like to begin by emphasizing clearly that the government is committed to taking immediate and concrete action to address the issue of climate change and cleaning up the environment.

As the Prime Minister said in his speech of February 5, just two days ago:

—we have to have a realistic plan, not just empty rhetoric.

Our government supports a concerted global effort to deal with climate change—and such an effort [to be effective] must include the major emitters, including the United States and China.

But we cannot ask others to act unless we are prepared to start at home, with real action on greenhouse gases and air pollution.

In short, the time for empty rhetoric is over. It is time for real action.

This government has a realistic plan. Our government has launched an ambitious environmental agenda that will have clear benefits for the environment and for the health of all Canadians.

The environment, particularly climate change, is a fundamental, multi-faceted issue that will require collaborative efforts from all levels of government.

We are committed to working with the provinces and territories in order to address shared challenges while ensuring that national and provincial efforts are well coordinated. Environment is a shared jurisdiction where all governments have a responsibility to act and to be accountable to their citizens.

Quebec is a significant player in the environment, as are all the provinces and territories. We recognize that Quebec has a comprehensive climate change plan and we commend the province's efforts. We have a good working relationship on many federal-provincial issues, not only with Quebec but with other provinces as well. The federal government is equally committed to taking action on climate change and I hope our two governments can work together to achieve shared goals and objectives.

As well, in this House, our government has decided to follow a different course of action in regard to funding of environmental programs.

Business of Supply

The government has recently committed over \$2 billion in a series of ecoenergy measures to promote both renewable energy and energy efficiency. These initiatives will complement current and future provincial and territorial efforts on climate change and support shared goals and objectives on air pollution and greenhouse gases in every region of the country, including Quebec.

In short, this funding will deliver real results. Canadians from coast to coast to coast will benefit as concrete reductions in greenhouse gases and air pollutants are achieved. I am confident that these initiatives, which will complement Quebec's climate change plan, will be well received by all Quebecers.

We value provincial and territorial expertise in all aspects of environmental management and local considerations and will ensure that this expertise is utilized when moving forward on the environmental agenda.

In fact, many elements of the government's new ecoenergy programs will require joint efforts, including participation of the federal, provincial and territorial governments, industry, and the universities. Public-private partnerships with industry and federal and provincial governments will be forged where there is a shared interest.

In fact, ours is the first federal government to come forward with a comprehensive plan to regulate both greenhouse gases and pollutants in the industrial sector.

This government is committed to achieving real and measurable results that will produce health and environmental benefits for all Canadians. When it comes to the health of Canadians and the environment, we are not simply willing to adopt voluntary approaches, which do not necessarily lead to meaningful improvements.

We will set realistic and concrete mandatory targets for the short, the medium and the long term that will result in cleaner air, reduced greenhouse gas emissions and a healthier environment.

Our approach is balanced. New regulations will be complemented by a series of new programs that will support national goals and objectives.

• (1050)

The new ecoenergy initiatives are a prime example of our balanced approach, as they will complement the government's regulatory measures under the proposed clean air act, Bill C-30. They will deliver real results while regulations are being developed. They will also drive the technological innovation required to support upcoming regulations.

Provinces and territories are responsible for a great deal of the day to day delivery of the environmental programs. They work directly with local business, industry and municipalities, and they manage and monitor many facets of the environment across the wide expanse of the country.

We recognize that all levels of government are currently taking action to tackle air emissions. As such, we have launched a frank and transparent process of dialogue to ensure continued exchange of information throughout the regulatory development process.

At the beginning of November last year, consultations on the regulatory framework were launched with provinces and territories as well as with industrial sectors, aboriginal groups and non-governmental organizations.

I am pleased to say that to date these consultations have been positive and constructive. Provinces and territories are generally supportive of the federal government's efforts to introduce regulatory measures and to consult on setting the targets and the timelines.

We will continue to work in partnership and will respect shared responsibility among all levels of government. Our ongoing dialogue with the provinces and territories is key to achieving consistent and comprehensive national outcomes.

Our Minister of the Environment has met with several of his provincial and territorial counterparts, including Quebec's Minister of Sustainable Development, Environment and Parks. These meetings have been productive, with a shared view that both orders of government can continue to work together.

In fact, we are pleased to say that provinces and territories recognize that this government is taking immediate action on climate change and is prepared to work in collaboration to address this shared challenge.

The government's policy is clear. We will establish targets that will result in concrete improvements in environmental outcomes. These targets will be realistic and they will be achievable.

The environmental agenda developed by this government ensures a balance between recognizing the increased federal role to act in the national interest while ensuring provincial cooperation on an ongoing basis.

This government values the work of provinces and territories and believes they are critical players in environmental management. We will work with them in a cooperative and productive manner as this environmental agenda is further developed.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Malo (Verchères—Les Patriotes, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment's speech. In his presentation, he said, among other things, that when it comes to environmental issues, the Conservative government plans to recognize provincial governments' expertise.

Is he aware that, over the years, Quebec has developed extraordinary expertise on environmental matters, that the province wants to implement an innovative greenhouse gas management program, and that to make it happen, it needs the \$328 million from the federal government?

Earlier today, his colleague from Beauport—Limoilou, her expression speaking volumes, claimed she did not know how she would vote on this very important Bloc Québécois motion.

Does the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment know how he will be voting on this motion, which is so important for Quebecers and for the global environment?

Business of Supply

•(1055)

[English]

Mr. Mark Warawa: Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member well knows, I have met numerous times, on the environment committee and the legislative committee, with representatives from the Bloc.

He knows well that this government is committed to cleaning up the environment and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. He knows well that one of the first people our new environment minister met was the minister of the environment in Quebec.

We are working collaboratively. We are working together and we respect one another's roles in cleaning up the environment, but the fact is that the Bloc has no hope of ever getting anything done for Quebecers. It is this government that is committed to doing so.

The hon. member also knows well that the former Liberal government did nothing on the environment, and he knows that this government has already taken action.

We will work collaboratively. We will work together. We look forward to his assistance so that we can move forward as a government in cleaning up the environment.

[Translation]

Mr. Roger Gaudet (Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is simple. I would like to ask the parliamentary secretary if Quebec is effectively entitled to \$328 million. In fact, in his speech, the leader of my party, the hon. member for Laurier—Sainte-Marie, said that Canada invested \$66 billion in tar sands, natural gas and oil. Moreover, it had already invested \$6 billion in a pilot project in Ontario. Let us not forget that Quebec contributed a quarter of those amounts, which total \$72 billion. When divided by four, that is \$18 billion, if my calculations are right.

Quebec is asking for \$328 million, but nobody in the Conservative government can say if it will get it or not.

Let us be serious. The government constantly says that Liberals were 13 years in power and did nothing. Conservatives have already been in power for one year and have not done any better. What is the decision? Will they pay the \$328 million, yes or no? That is what we want to know. We are not asking for much, only our just due

[English]

Mr. Mark Warawa: Mr. Speaker, I am not sure where the member has been for the last year. This government has taken action on the environment. We have accomplished more in the last year than the former Liberal government would have dreamed was even possible.

Only weeks ago in British Columbia we announced \$30 million for the Great Bear Rain Forest. On the other coast, the government has invested \$280 million to clean up the Sydney tar ponds. Why was this not done previously? Because of empty rhetoric and broken promises.

The Conservative government is a government of action. We will work with the province of Quebec. We want to and need to work together to see the passage of Bill C-30, Canada's legislation to clean up the environment in Canada and for the benefit of our globe.

Climate change is a real issue. We have to put down partisan politics. We have to work together for the health of our planet to stop climate change. I encourage the member to stop the rhetoric. Let us work together.

Mr. David McGuinty (Ottawa South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to speak this morning to the motion put forward by our colleagues.

[Translation]

I am pleased to rise in this House today to express my views on an issue as critical as the Kyoto protocol on climate change.

First, I would like to thank all the Bloc and NDP members for supporting the motion tabled in the House last week by the leader of the official opposition. Through their votes, the vast majority of hon. members confirmed their support for Kyoto and their commitment to fight climate change.

We know that the government is now all alone in its approach to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. This shows that it is headed in the wrong direction. The motion that enjoyed the support of the three opposition parties recognized that human activities are largely responsible for the disruptions affecting the climate, and demanded that the government respect its Kyoto commitments.

The motion directed the Prime Minister to develop a plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to use the existing means provided in the Canadian Environmental Protection Act to take necessary initiatives. The motion was adopted a week ago and the government is still not acting on it.

The Kyoto protocol is a cooperation tool that unites nations willing to address the international issue that global warming represents. It is not just a set of targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, it is not just a step forward, it is also, and more importantly, the right path that will lead us to results. The Kyoto protocol is dealing with the issue before it is too late, because the alarm is already sounding.

Last week, the intergovernmental panel on climate change, a group established by the United Nations, released a shocking report. It concluded that human activities are almost without a doubt responsible for global warming and are, consequently, also responsible for the major socio-economic disruptions that this warming trend could trigger in the years to come.

•(1100)

[English]

Despite the international panel's shocking statements last Friday, the Prime Minister cannot yet answer a question that I and many others have been asking him for over a year now. Where is his plan to fight climate change?

The only conclusion we are left with is that the Conservative government does not have a plan. The Prime Minister is trying to fool Canadians who are now more than ever concerned with the future of our planet. We cannot trust a Prime Minister who was leader of the opposition and called the Kyoto treaty a socialist scheme. He promised to battle its ratification, "whatever the cost".

Business of Supply

We know that if the Prime Minister were serious about climate change, he would have mentioned it in his last fiscal update, just last fall. If climate change were a priority at all for the Conservatives, it would at least have been mentioned perhaps in their Speech from the Throne or perhaps in their so-called list of five priorities during the campaign. It was absent from all those documents, from all those speeches and from all that rhetoric.

[*Translation*]

The Conservatives' record in the fight against greenhouse gas emissions is just pathetic. The Conservative government axed federal programs that promoted the reduction of greenhouse gases.

The proof? Here it is: \$395 million cut from the EnerGuide program for home renovations; \$500 million cut from the EnerGuide program for low-income homeowners; and \$250 million cut from the partnership fund for climate change projects that the Liberals concluded with the provinces and municipalities.

Almost \$600 million was cut from wind power production and renewable power production programs. The Conservatives did away with the One Tonne Challenge. They cut a billion dollars from the Climate Fund to reduce greenhouse gases. They cut \$2 billion of general climate-change program funding.

The most recent victim of the Conservatives' cuts to environmental programs is the Commercial Building Incentive Program, which provided a financial incentive for the design and construction of new energy efficient buildings.

This was not a useless program; it produced results. Since its inception, this program supported no less than 541 projects in Canada that improved the energy performance of new buildings. These new buildings perform on average almost 35% better than similar buildings.

This program proved that it helped reduce greenhouse gases; every residential building, for example, built through the program emitted 182 fewer tonnes of greenhouse gases a year. For commercial buildings, the average reduction of greenhouse gases was 291 tonnes a year.

A government that eliminates such a program cannot say that it is taking care of the climate change problem. And similar announcements keep on coming.

Yesterday we learned that the government is shutting down the Northern Climate ExChange in the Yukon, which excels in climate change research in northern Canada and in the world. Since the Conservatives are cutting off their annual funding of \$320,000, the researchers and scientists at Northern Climate ExChange have to end their studies.

If we do a quick calculation of all of the cuts, we get over \$5.5 billion that has been eliminated from initiatives to reduce greenhouse gases—\$5.5 billion in cuts. Is this how the government shows that it is serious about fighting climate change?

● (1105)

[*English*]

If the government is serious about action on climate change, it certainly has not shown it with its widely penned and so-called clean air act.

The Bill C-30 legislative committee has resurrected a bill that was dead on arrival in the House of Commons and only resurrected it with a promise to completely and utterly rewrite it.

Experts agree that there are no significant powers, not a single significant power to regulate in the new Bill C-30, that the government does not already possess under the Canadian Environmental Protection Act. In short, the bill does nothing. I think we know that if the government were serious, it would have acted rather than punting the whole issue into Parliament.

Just half an hour ago, the Minister of the Environment refused to promise that the amended Bill C-30, once sent back to this chamber on March 30, would be acted on quickly by the government. He refused to guarantee and promise Canadian people that the hard work of the legislative committee would be implemented by the government. What kind of game is this when we are talking about such a serious issue for the future of the country?

Let us turn our attention to a subject that fascinates government members, the Liberal record on the environment. Project green was introduced as the centrepiece of the greenest budget in Canadian history. To paraphrase the Minister of the Environment, who said that? Elizabeth May, the leader of the Green Party of Canada.

With several key platforms for action, six greenhouse gases were added to the list of toxins under the Canadian Environmental Protection Act. A proposed large final emitter system was published and draft regulations were nearly released before the unexpected 2006 election. We released a proposed set of rules for an offset credit system to award credits to large and small industries, technology companies, municipalities, farmers, foresters and individual Canadians, achieving greenhouse gas emission reductions. That system would have also created a market, allowing these individuals, industries and organizations to sell their credits, which is one of the most efficient ways to get the maximum emissions reductions at the lowest cost.

Business of Supply

Our climate fund was set to start operations in early 2006, acting as a kind of investment bank. It would have purchased reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, resulting from tangible projects. For Canadians, opportunities would have been available in every sector of the economy. Many different groups would have benefited from the fund: forestry companies that engaged in state of the art forest management practices; farmers who adopted low-till practices; property developers who included district heating and renewable energy elements in their plans for their new subdivisions; businesses that developed innovative ways to reduce emissions through recycling and energy efficiency; companies and municipalities that invested in their communities to encourage alternative transportation modes; municipalities that went further and captured landfill gas and used it to generate electricity; or courier companies that retrofitted their fleets.

We have lost a key year, 12 months of silence, 12 months of blame game. In the 12th month, what does the government do? It goes back into our green plan. It cherry-picks three core programs and re-gifts them for Canadians. Not only does it re-gift the programs, but seriously weakens all three.

In other words, at some point Canada's new government will have to deliver a plan. We will have to see a plan. The Canadian people are desirous of a plan.

Another major part of project green was the \$250 million partnership fund. This fund was expected to grow to \$2 billion to \$3 billion as projects were expected to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 55 to 85 megatonnes by 2012.

•(1110)

The first project announced under the partnership fund was a three-way federal-provincial-private plan in Prince Edward Island to upgrade the province's electricity transmission system and to allow P. E.I. to take advantage of wind energy. This is exactly the kind of investment we need to leverage industry to fight climate change. It is a program that was stillborn with the Conservative government a year ago.

Our climate change plan was in fact a business strategy for Canada that generated beneficial investments across the economy. Where did that plan go?

[*Translation*]

We do not only denounce the lack of vision on the part of the government. The Liberal approach is quite different from what the Bloc Québécois is advocating. Today, the Bloc is calling for \$328 million to be transferred from Ottawa's coffers, merely a transfer of money. We would prefer a partnership between the two levels of government.

When Canada ratified the Kyoto protocol in 1997, it joined its efforts in a cooperation agreement entered into by a number of countries to achieve a single goal. Climate change is a global problem that Canada cannot solve on its own, in isolation. We took the lead, we agreed to live up to our responsibilities and we committed ourselves to working to improve the situation.

Because we cannot ignore our allies in the fight against climate change, we must also seize the opportunity to work in close

collaboration with each of the provinces, each of the territories, all of the cities and villages and aboriginal communities. We are talking here about a collective effort in which every level of government must do its part. The federal government should extend its hand to them and demonstrate its intention of collaborating. Cooperation is one of the keys to success. That is how we can be sure that our efforts are not in vain and that we are advancing toward our common goal.

Just as for all of the childcare agreements that the government had entered into with the 13 provinces and territories, just as for the Kelowna accord, the first comprehensive federal agreement with all of the major aboriginal and Métis communities, the objective of the Kyoto protocol Partnership Fund was to secure agreements between Ottawa and all of the provincial and territorial governments for fighting climate change.

We had a memorandum of agreement, with Quebec, which involved \$328 million and possibly more. Similar agreements had been signed with Ontario, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia and Saskatchewan. But after the 2006 election, Quebec found itself alone in its efforts to achieve the Kyoto protocol objectives. The federal government made a big mistake when it took away the \$328 million we had set aside for Quebec to fight climate change.

•(1115)

[*English*]

In my closing remarks, I am going to ask the government again to table a plan for the people of Canada to honour our obligations under the international treaty called the Kyoto protocol.

As a nation and as a people, we committed to lead the world in a global response to a global problem. The government refuses to accept that although there are over 180 nation-states, there is only one atmosphere and there must be a global response. That is why 168 countries, including Canada, have signed the treaty. The government instead would like us to leave the treaty but will not tell Canadians the truth about it.

[*Translation*]

To conclude, I would like to move an amendment to the motion by the Bloc Québécois that is before us today.

I move that the motion be amended by replacing the words "the sum of" with the words "a sum of not less than" and by adding after the words "Kyoto Protocol targets" the following: "in accordance with the commitment made to all of the provinces and territories by the Partnership Fund established in Project Green".

[*English*]

Those are my remarks. On this extraordinarily important time in Canadian history, we support the efforts of the Bloc Québécois; we support the efforts of all provinces and we are desperately looking forward to plan which engages Canadians, provinces, municipalities, towns and villages in what is the challenge of the 21st century: to reduce our greenhouse gases and protect the only atmosphere we have.

Business of Supply

The Deputy Speaker: The amendment is in order. However, it is my duty to inform hon. members that pursuant to Standing Order 85, an amendment to an opposition motion may be moved only with the consent of the sponsor of the motion. The sponsor of the motion is not present in the House. In the event of the absence of the sponsor, it is permissible for consent to be either given or denied by the House leader, the deputy House leader, the whip or the deputy whip of the sponsor's party. Seeing as none of them is present at the moment, the amendment is not receivable at this time.

• (1120)

Mr. Jim Abbott (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that was a very precious presentation made by the member. It strikes me though that it was as vacuous as the Liberal policy that he was touting throughout his entire speech.

My understanding is that Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty also made a promise that he was going to shut down all of the coal fired generation for hydro in the province of Ontario. Of course, any right thinking person would have known that that promise was simply not able to be kept. The amount of power required in order to keep the economy of Ontario going is such that there was no way it could have been kept, yet he went ahead and made that promise.

I wonder if the member might be able to inform us if he has had any discussion, perhaps at the Christmas dinner table, about that unkept promise. It seems to me it runs in the family of Liberals that there are all sorts of things said and there is absolutely never any intention to follow up, much less any actual action to follow up.

Our party is looking out for Canadians and is going to create action. We are not interested in mere precious speeches.

Mr. David McGuinty: Mr. Speaker, it gives me a wonderful opportunity to remind Canadians that it was not our party that guaranteed wait times within its first term of office and has now backed off publicly. It was not our party that promised not to undermine all those who held income trusts. The Prime Minister of Canada gave three separate speeches when he promised Canadians that he would not wreck their savings. Let us be honest about this issue.

The issue here is about partnership and whether or not the government even has a plan. Just moments ago in the committee the Minister of the Environment had several questions put to him by me and other members of all parties. After \$5.6 billion in cuts in the last budget, \$5.6 billion in cuts for climate change responses in this country, I asked the minister if he could please reveal to Canadians in dollar terms how much has been spent by the government in its first year of office. The minister was completely incapable of answering the question.

This is deserving of a national response. This is deserving of a plan from a government whose leader for 12 years before becoming Prime Minister was the leader of the anti-climate change movement in the country, who raised funds to undermine the ratification of the Kyoto protocol. This is a matter of record. This is not a matter of embellishment. What does the Prime Minister have to hide? Was he misleading Canadians then, or is he misleading them now? We do not know the answer to that question.

It is important for us now to move forward and find a plan for the country. We had a plan. It was disembowelled by the government. Some \$5.6 billion was slashed, so now we are looking to see where the government is taking us.

Apparently we are not going to participate in the international emissions trading system, which is news to Canadian industry, particularly the oil and gas companies that are counting on the mechanism to reduce their greenhouse gases efficiently. We are not going to emulate the U.S. Clean Air Act which actually inspired the Kyoto protocol because it was there whence we derived the whole concept of a domestic emissions trading system.

We do not know where the government is going but we know there is Bill C-30, the so-called clean air act, which has been tossed to a legislative committee. When I asked the Minister of the Environment an hour ago whether he would agree to promise to Canadians that when that work came back to the chamber on March 30 he would move immediately to implement it, he said no.

My point is it is time for a plan from the government. There is no plan. The government is making it up as it goes along. What the Conservatives are really doing are jumping from ice floe to ice floe, handing out cheques across the country and re-gifting Liberal programs.

Mr. Mike Lake (Edmonton—Mill Woods—Beaumont, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I was quite interested when I heard the hon. member say that he was going to talk about the Liberal record and then he did what the Liberals always do, which was to use terminology such as “platforms for action”. He talked about “regulations nearly released”. He used the term “set to start operations”. I thought that was interesting.

I am wondering if the Liberals' motto on the environment might be changing from “didn't get it done” to “we were just about to maybe think about starting to potentially get it done”. After 13 years, the actual record was 35% above Kyoto targets, 28th out of 29 OECD countries in terms of air quality and a record number of smog days. Given the choice, and Canadians seem to have a choice, we can have a party that talked a good game for 13 years and never did anything or a party that in one year has proven that it can perform on the field.

When is the hon. member going to encourage his own Liberal leader and his party to stop playing games and get with the program, roll up their sleeves and actually start to work to get the clean air act passed?

• (1125)

Mr. David McGuinty: Mr. Speaker, it is a wonderful opportunity again for me to put questions to the government that were put to the Minister of the Environment an hour ago.

Every question I will now put to the government remains unanswered because the minister refused to answer or could not answer them. For example, I asked the minister and the government members whether they were prepared to monetize carbon. I and all Canadians would like an answer to that question.

Which is the most efficient way to move forward? Should we move using a domestic emissions trading system, an international emissions trading system or a carbon tax? Could they please explain to the Canadian people what it is they intend to do in this regard.

Business of Supply

I also asked the minister if he could tell us what the price of a tonne of carbon was today in the European and Chicago markets. He could not answer. I asked the minister what the projected value was of the international carbon market by 2020 or 2050? He could not answer. I asked him on what scale his department estimated that the monetization of carbon would affect the Canadian economy, say, by 2017. He did not even understand what the quantization of carbon meant.

I asked him again whether he would introduce a cap and trade system for Canada. He could not or would not answer. On and on it went.

The point is that we are waiting for some indication from the government as to what it is it actually intends to do, other than master the blame game, which is precisely what we have been seeing for a year. When the polls struck, it desperately sought to put a green face on what is clearly an anti-climate change party.

Mr. Lloyd St. Amand (Brant, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague's speech was very thoughtful and articulate. I heard him say that Canada was 1 of 168 countries in the world that signed on to the Kyoto protocol.

During the parliamentary secretary's 10 minute speech, not one word was mentioned about Kyoto or the Kyoto agreement.

In the hon. member's knowledge of the history of this country, has a single Canadian government ever failed to follow through on an international commitment or an international treaty? It rather seems to be the mindset of the present government that, for the first time in Canadian history, an international commitment will not be honoured by Canada.

Is the hon. member's knowledge of history any different from mine?

Mr. David McGuinty: Mr. Speaker, the fact is that the Government of Canada, first through its first Minister of the Environment, dispatched senior officials to a conference of the parties meeting in Nairobi, Kenya, to openly undermine the Kyoto treaty, this at a time when our country in the international community was actually chairing the entire international negotiation process. It was revealed to us through leaked documents from the Minister of the Environment's department that officials were dispatched to sabotage the process from the inside. Now we learn that it gets worse.

In answer to the member's question, I do not recollect, in my knowledge of international environmental treaty law, an occasion when a government has deliberately misled the international community in its reports. Now we learn that in the report sent by the government last November to the office that oversees the commitments of Canada and the 167 other countries under Kyoto, we learn that the only thing, after its first year in government, that the Conservatives have sent forward as a plan for Canada is the plan put forward by the hon. leader of the official opposition.

The 10 year, multi-billion dollar deal, the green plan that the Conservatives are so ready to reject, is the one they put forward to the international community.

It is interesting that in that report to the international community the government did not come clean and tell the international community that it had just eviscerated the very report that it put forward to actually substantiate that it might be doing something on climate change, cutting the funding of that plan by 50% and misleading the international community. I have never seen that before.

• (1130)

[Translation]

Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak today on the Bloc Québécois motion on air quality, the environment and the Kyoto protocol. I have listened to our Liberal colleague speaking of the green plan and so on. I believe he has neglected to say that their environmental plan has been a failure, and I will give him an example. Moreover, the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development has pointed out that, even if the reduction measures set out in the Liberal government's 2005 plan had been fully implemented, it is hard to say whether the planned reductions would have been sufficient to allow us to fulfil our obligations. This was in the report tabled by the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development on September 28, 2006.

The Liberals are busy patting themselves on the back and saying that they would have solved the environmental and air quality problems if they had been in power. This raises some questions, particularly since the environment minister at that time is now the leader of the Liberal Party. Now he thinks donning a green scarf is going to change Canada's environment.

I do not want to dwell on the Liberal position for too long. I do not believe they managed during their 13 years in power to demonstrate that they considered the environment important, considering that greenhouse gas emissions increased by 30% over that period. The Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development has even stated that the measures for 2005 could not achieve the Kyoto protocol objectives.

Regrettably, when we look at the new government—as it still wants to be called—one which was at one point totally opposed to the Kyoto protocol, we see it has been forced to set aside the Minister of the Environment in favour of another.

My congratulations to Canadians, to all those who have realized that the environment has become a priority for our country. A person cannot open a newspaper or listen to a news broadcast these days without realizing that the environment is becoming one of our priorities.

It is not a normal situation in our communities all over the country for little children to have asthma, and for children, adults and seniors to be sick because of environmental pollutants. It is our fundamental responsibility, as citizens and as human beings, to preserve our planet for our children, for future generations. How can we not make the environment a priority?

Business of Supply

I can see that the Bloc Québécois wants to be the champion of the environment in Quebec, as if it had all the answers. As I recall, just before the election, the Sierra Club and Greenpeace said we were number one in terms of the environment. They did mention the Bloc Québécois, but never said this was the doing of the Bloc alone.

I should remind the House and the people of Canada and Quebec that we all have to work together, because environmental pollution is something that does not affect only Quebec. It is happening worldwide. We must therefore work together and collectively to prevent pollution. As a member of this House, I was very disappointed when the Bloc Québécois voted against a motion put before the House by the NDP to ban the use of pesticides on people's lawns.

• (1135)

I was very disappointed with the position taken by the Bloc Québécois, saying that this was a provincial jurisdiction. I find it hard to believe that pollutants fall under provincial jurisdiction.

Quebec had good legislation respecting pesticides. We even commended it for that. But in this House, in this Parliament, here in Ottawa, by voting against our motion to ban pesticides, Bloc members have prevented the rest of Canada from enjoying similar legislation. It struck me as unfortunate, especially since they paint themselves as saviours of the environment and of Kyoto. They opposed a motion going to the heart of the issue of health in the regions, as it dealt with the banning of pesticides on grassy areas in municipalities and towns. How could they oppose that?

It is almost as if they can think of only one thing: Quebec, and only Quebec. That is unfortunate. The motion before us is a case in point: it talks only about Quebec. An amendment might be put forward later. This time, one would hope that they will not vote the same way they did on pesticides. Hopefully, they will say that they are prepared to work together with the rest of Canada and agree with this benefiting all the provinces.

Let us talk about some of the amendments proposed by the NDP to Canada's Clean Air Act. Canadians want us to act immediately to reduce pollution so their families can breathe cleaner air and Canada can do its part in the international effort to combat climate change at a world-wide level.

Re-writing the ineffective and inadequate Bill C-30, an Act to amend the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999, the Energy Efficiency Act and the Motor Vehicle Fuel Consumption Standards Act (Canada's Clean Air Act) within a special legislative committee offers an important opportunity for Canada to get back on the road to reducing pollution and to combating climate change.

Once again, the NDP proposed the creation of a special legislative committee on the environment, on air quality, to study the Conservative bill so that we could deal with the problem immediately through this bill. A special committee would not have to follow the same procedures. So, in that sense, we could go faster. The NDP proposed that we could present amendments to the bill within 30 days.

Earlier, I listened to the Liberals telling us that Bill C-30 would do nothing to improve air quality in Canada. Unless I am completely mistaken, the opposition now forms a majority in the House of

Commons and also on a special legislative committee. As a result, the opposition could present amendments to improve the bill so that it goes in the right direction.

We wanted to do that within 30 days to ensure that we had a bill before the budget is tabled in the House of Commons, because there could be a vote of non-confidence in the government after the budget is tabled. We wanted to be sure that the bill is through the House of Commons and sent to the Senate.

However, the other political parties, the Conservatives, the Liberals and the Bloc Québécois decided to delay review of the bill until March 31, or after the budget. This position of the other parties is regrettable. The Conservative party wanted to hear 40 witnesses in committee, and the Liberals wanted more than 40 witnesses. I do not know how many witnesses the Bloc Québécois also wanted to call.

If we do not already know what we need to improve the bill, if in 30 days we could not review the bill and agree on what needs to be done, instead of playing politics, then we are missing the boat. That is my sincere belief.

• (1140)

With a new bill, Parliament can ensure significant and immediate action enabling Canadians to see improvements in the air they breathe throughout their lives, in addition to protecting the planet for their children and their grandchildren.

The NDP is proposing a series of detailed changes to Bill C-30, which again commits Canada to respecting its short-term commitments under the Kyoto protocol and ensures the development of an exhaustive plan for it to meet internationally recognized scientific objectives in the medium and long term.

The NDP will continue to seek comments and other amendments from environmental experts and Canadians both during the period leading up to the work by the special committee and while it is working.

The amendments proposed by the NDP are to impose, by legislative rather than regulatory means, short-, medium- and long-term targets for absolute reductions of greenhouse gases by requiring that Canada: meet the 2008-2012 target under the Kyoto protocol; ensure an 80% reduction, based on scientific research, of 1990 levels by 2050; achieve the interim five-year targets between 2015 and 2050; and impose, by means of legislation rather than declaration of intent, an earlier-than-expected timetable for regulation of the industrial sector. Such regulations should be put in place by 2008.

Business of Supply

The NDP also asks that Canada: impose, through legislation rather than regulation, a fixed cap for greenhouse gas emissions from the industrial sector of at least 45 megatonnes a year; require, by legislation, the establishment of mandatory standards for air contaminants in the year following the adoption of this new law, in addition to a plan for complying with these standards, including mandatory emission standards for large industrial facilities; require, by legislation, an energy efficiency standard for vehicle fuel that comes close to that of leading North American jurisdictions, which will be published by 2008 and which will be in place for production year 2011, so that vehicle manufacturers have sufficient notice concerning the expiry of the voluntary agreement. This would be accompanied by a new authority for the government to establish a fair transition fund for the automobile sector.

The NDP also asks that, by legislation, the government set a carbon cap and establish a carbon-trading system in Canada and that it eliminate key tax incentives for the gas and oil sector, particularly the accelerated depreciation deduction given for tar sands development.

I think this is a very unfortunate situation for Canadians. A few weeks ago, I listened to a program in French on Radio-Canada about the research done in Alberta. Rivers there are polluted and this has posed a threat to an aboriginal community. It seems that the government is prepared to agree to increase oil production in western Canada by five times more than current production. We are told that production today, with current technology, causes an incredible amount of pollution.

We must therefore ask ourselves the following questions. Is the Conservative government serious? Is the Prime Minister of Canada, who is from Alberta, really serious? Will he do what is best for the environment? Will he take the requests of Canadians to heart and respond to them sincerely, with concrete action?

• (1145)

Here is an example of concrete action: in north-eastern New Brunswick, along the Baie-des-Chaleurs, and in the Gaspé near Matane, windmills have been built to generate electricity. That is one way of combating pollution. The area I come from is ideal for that.

People always say that politicians make promises that they never keep. I can promise that there will be plenty of wind for the rest of our days and for future generations. There will always be wind. That is a promise we can keep and windmills need wind.

What sort of investments has the government made so far to fight pollution and to help the environment? Whether we like it or not, we need light, electricity and resources. However, we could be doing more. What is the government doing to encourage so-called green cars, which do not pollute? What is it doing about that? We hear nothing about it and even if they do talk, the talk is not followed by action.

In my area, for example, there is a coal-fired power plant in Belledune. Why would the federal government not invest for the longer term in natural gas in northern New Brunswick? The cuts it made in EI benefits paid in that area amount to \$85 million a year. It could invest that in the environment. These are concrete measures

that would do good, create good jobs and be better for the environment than coal use.

Since the Bloc Québécois introduced the motion I would like to ask its permission to propose an amendment to promote cooperation in the interest of all Canadians.

I propose, seconded by the hon. member for Sault Ste. Marie, the following amendment:

That the motion be amended by adding the word “minimum” before the word “sum”, and by adding immediately after the words “Kyoto Protocol targets”: “, and that, after negotiations, the Government of Canada should provide appropriate funds to all other Canadian provinces and territories to make the transition towards Kyoto”.

I would like to ask for the support of the Bloc to introduce that amendment.

The Deputy Speaker: The amendment is in order. However, I must inform the members that, according to Standing Order 85, an amendment to an opposition motion can only be introduced with the consent of the mover of the motion.

Consequently, I ask the hon. House leader of the Bloc Québécois if he consents to the introduction of the amendment.

• (1150)

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval—Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is with pleasure that I accept the amendment proposed by the NDP and I agree to debate it.

[English]

The Deputy Speaker: The amendment is in order.

[Translation]

On questions and comments, the hon. member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie.

Mr. Bernard Bigras (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, first, I salute the initiative of the member for Acadie—Bathurst concerning his amendment.

I think that the amendment moved by the NDP confirms one thing, which is that the territorial approach that the Bloc Québécois has been advocating for years is the best approach for Canada to meet the Kyoto protocol targets.

Quebec is not asking for \$328 million so it can beg Ottawa for money to fight climate change. Since the provinces are responsible for producing and distributing energy and this energy is consumed in the provinces, this is the most effective and efficient way to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Does my colleague recognize that the best way to reach the Kyoto targets is to transfer this money to the provinces, with the obligation to respect the Kyoto commitments in the territories and the provinces?

This territorial approach is aimed at leaving the provinces with the responsibility to reach their targets—binding ones, if necessary—while committing to a financial transfer from Ottawa to the provinces. This is probably the best way to maximize the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions for each dollar invested and to ensure that the Liberal approach, which provides for the spending of billions of dollars in the fight against climate change, does not lead to a 30% increase.

Business of Supply

Does my colleague recognize that this territorial approach, which is also aimed at transferring funds to the provinces, which have a major responsibility for the management of natural resources, is the best way to reach the Kyoto protocol targets?

Mr. Yvon Godin: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question.

I believe that if a province is proactive, if it is moving forward and if it has an acceptable plan that meets the Kyoto targets, then the country should support that province. For example, Manitoba has a plan. That province wants to move forward and work with the industry. We must work hard to prevent our planet from continuing to be polluted. Considering the health and well-being of our children, the health and well-being of future generations, how could we be opposed to a population that wants to take charge and to fight pollution? We must ensure that we have a planet that is clean, a planet on which we enjoy living.

I am grateful to the Bloc Québécois for supporting the NDP amendment to include the provinces. It is now up to the provinces to propose plans. If some provinces cannot propose plans, it will be up to the federal government to act. It is the responsibility of the Conservatives to take action and clean our planet—or at least take part in that cleaning—to respect the Kyoto protocol and to meet the targets set, so that Canadians from coast to coast will enjoy a clean environment. This is one of our basic responsibilities.

We cannot rely only on what the Liberals have said during their 13 years in office, when pollution increased by 30%.

We cannot trust the Conservatives, who are now in office and who want to achieve the objectives by the year 2050. We must fight pollution now. We must work hard.

A majority of opposition members support the idea of making changes to Bill C-30. We must show Canadians, who are so concerned, that we want to take action.

Earlier, I referred to the Radio-Canada news story and I mentioned how it generated concern among the public. People in our ridings often tell us that, even though temperatures may be mild, they are worried.

We must act now. As leaders in Canada and in this Parliament, it is our responsibility to act.

• (1155)

[English]

Mr. Lloyd St. Amand (Brant, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I applaud the member opposite for his speech. He talked about many environmentally related things.

He talked about wind, and we do not hear enough about wind energy, solar energy and what the federal government should be doing to promote alternative forms of energy.

He talked about automobiles. As I understand the science of global warming or climate change, automobiles account for 12% of greenhouse gas emissions in Canada, and automobile manufacturers are doing more and more, as I understand it, to manufacture automobiles which will emit fewer greenhouse gas emissions into the atmosphere.

The member also talked about targets and the difficulty that we as a country have had in meeting our Kyoto targets. As he may know, heavy industry's large final emitters account for the vast majority of greenhouse gas emissions. I am sure the hon. member opposite would agree with that.

He may also know that the oil sands industry was to have produced one million barrels of oil per day by the year 2020. It reached that target as of two years ago, so the growth in the oil sands industry has been unprecedented, almost unbelievable, and the oil sands industry is a huge emitter of greenhouse gas emissions.

Does the member opposite see, as I do, a clear link between the incredible growth in the oil sands in the last five years and our inability as a country to meet our Kyoto targets?

Mr. Yvon Godin: Mr. Speaker, as the member has said, we see that the oil sands were supposed to have a million barrels in 2020. I believe that is what I understood him to say. They have been producing this amount for almost two years already, and they are looking ahead to producing five times more.

As I said, when we looked at the commentary on the documentary that was done by the French channel of CBC, we saw that people are worried about that. They are very worried. Rivers are polluted already. Nothing has been done about it. The aboriginals who live around that river are at a loss. We heard yesterday in the House of Commons how pitiful it is in some of our aboriginal villages. We are not looking after them. It is as if we do not care. It does not make sense.

If we do not look after the environment, if we do not do the right things that need to be done, we will be sorry. Maybe we will not be here to be sorry, but our next generations will be caught in it. Our next generations are our kids and the kids of our kids. Do we not love them? How could we be so selfish as to not do the right things now?

As for wind power, as I explained a few minutes ago in French, our other official language, in northern New Brunswick people sometimes say that politicians do not tell the truth, that they lie. But I can say this truth: we will promise wind forever in northern New Brunswick. We could have wind power there that does not pollute our planet. People are ready to come to an agreement with the government, but where is the federal government on this?

We have coal energy in Belledune, New Brunswick. Why do we not get natural gas and cut down the emissions of gas as compared to coal? Things could be done, but there is no action. We have a lot of talk but no action.

I was pleased this week that action has been taken in the House. I proposed to the procedure and House affairs committee that all the ministers' cars idling outside, 27 cars idling for two, three and four hours, should shut down. It put the government to shame and the engines were shut down. That is positive. That is concrete stuff. That is action.

That is the type of action we have to take. We have to lead on the environment. We have that responsibility as leaders of our country. We have been elected by the people of our constituencies. We have been elected to lead our country. The citizens of our country are saying that enough is enough and that we must look after the environment because we cannot continue on the road that we are on.

Not too long ago, I met someone in my riding who said, "Is it not beautiful? Look at the sun. It is the most beautiful—"

● (1200)

The Deputy Speaker: Order. Resuming debate, the hon. member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Bernard Bigras (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I have today the great pleasure to speak to a motion introduced by the leader of the Bloc Québécois which has to do with the Kyoto protocol. The motion proposes:

That, having recognized the principle of complying with the Kyoto targets, it is the opinion of this House that the government should provide the Government of Quebec with the sum of \$328 million to enable it to implement its plan to meet the Kyoto Protocol targets.

We also took note of the amendment introduced by the NDP, the purpose of which was to indicate clearly that the \$328 million is of course a minimum and that the government should also give the appropriate amounts to the other provinces that wish to embark on the fight against climate change.

I would say that the original Bloc motion plus the NDP amendment prove one thing. The first part of the motion refers to the fact that the principle of complying with the Kyoto protocol has been recognized in this House. What does that mean? First, it means that through the House of Commons and parliamentarians, we have taken strong action to send to the government the clear message that we want a credible plan for fighting climate change that incorporates the Kyoto targets.

I will remind you that last May, the Bloc Québécois tabled a motion calling on the government to table this credible plan incorporating the Kyoto protocol targets. The majority of members in this House—from the Bloc, the NDP and the Liberal Party—voted in favour. The principles of compliance with the Kyoto protocol that are included in the Bloc's motion today are thus repeated, and we would like the majority of the House to repeat this support many times expressed by parliamentarians, in the Bloc Québécois motion in May, in Bill C-288 tabled by the hon. member for Honoré-Mercier, and again this week in an opposition motion calling for compliance with the Kyoto protocol.

However, the reality is quite different. Greenhouse gas emissions have risen 27% since 1990. So billions of dollars have been invested in Canada to fight climate change, but the results have not come. This means that, to comply with its Kyoto targets, as things now stand the government will have to reduce its emissions not just by 27%, but also by another 6% on top of that.

In my opinion, the results presented by the Conservative government in Nairobi—results that can be attributed to the Liberal efforts of recent years—must drive home to us the importance of changing our approach to combating climate change in Canada.

Business of Supply

What is that approach? First of all, it is a voluntary approach which—if absolutely necessary, of course—would establish regulations, as proposed by the Liberal finance minister of the time, in a budget for example. But it was also an approach that would provide for regulations based on emission intensity.

What does that mean? It means that in the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions imposed on industry, we would take production into consideration and not set a reduction target based on the total quantity of greenhouse gases produced by these different industrial sectors.

This approach which has been adopted by the federal government, both Liberal and Conservative, is nothing but a gain, a savings and an advantage for the oil companies and the big polluters.

● (1205)

We are calling on the government to base its greenhouse gas reductions and its emission targets for large industrial emitters on the total quantity discharged by the different industrial sectors. But the Conservative government, which has adopted the same policy as the previous government, an approach that is ineffective, inefficient and unfair, is perpetuating an approach that has not yielded the desired results in the battle against greenhouse gas emissions.

We are today proposing to change this approach, to adopt a territorial approach whereby the provinces would be asked to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions in binding fashion, obliging them to cut emissions within their territory by 6%, while leaving them free to establish the plans, policies and programs they want.

The reason for doing this is quite simply because the energy policy of Quebec, which generates 95% of its power from hydroelectricity, is not the energy policy of Western Canada, which depends on hydrocarbons, oil sands and fossil fuels. The energy policy of Quebec is not that of Alberta. Neither is it the energy policy of Ontario, which has favoured coal in recent years, and more recently, nuclear power.

Therefore, since there is no common energy policy across Canada and since energy and natural resources are managed by the provinces, we must ensure that the provinces are involved.

Remember what the environment commissioner told us in her report on climate change programs. The provinces must be part of the solution because that is where electricity is produced, distributed and used.

Business of Supply

The government must recognize today that we should stay away from a sectorial approach and adopt a territorial approach that will allow us to put in place an effective, efficient and fairer national policy with regard to climate change. Canada's problem in fighting climate change has nothing to do with the programs themselves, as they already exist, but it has to do with the fact that they are not adapted to the provinces' energy reality.

Tuesday, at the Standing Committee on the Environment and Sustainable Development, we heard from a prominent climate expert who is a professor at the Université du Québec à Chicoutimi. He told us, and I quote:

One of the reasons for Canada's failure is its desire to have the same approach for all the players, supposedly because it is more equitable, even though the situation is not the same for all the players.

Mr. Villeneuve also said:

It is clear that regional approaches are much more interesting since decisions regarding energy policies are made at the provincial level and natural resources are managed by the provinces.

Canada did commit to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 6%. But can we adopt a so-called common approach that would be tailored to each province, something similar to what Europe did?

In 1997, Europe committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 8%. That same year, Europe went to Kyoto with specific objectives and a territorial approach to meet that 8% target. Under that approach, its sovereign countries—there were 15 at the time—would have different targets where some could increase their emissions and others could reduce them, taking into account various parameters such as the climate, which has a considerable impact on energy consumption. The economic structure has to be taken into account.

• (1210)

Each country's energy policy and wind energy potential must be taken into account in the targets negotiated with these countries.

This is a flexible approach that would let Canada continue to demonstrate to the international community that it is determined to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and meet its international commitments. Canada could also reach agreements with its provincial partners in order to develop a more effective climate change policy.

The third demand is the carbon exchange. Companies and industrial sectors are just waiting for greenhouse gas emissions regulations.

The government told us that it was going to base its regulation of the industry on emission intensity. In other words, in setting a target for each industrial sector, it was going to take into account production and greenhouse gas emissions. This approach cannot work.

On the one hand, this approach is unfair to industry sectors that have made efforts in the past, such as the industrial sectors in Quebec. Meanwhile, industrial sectors in the rest of Canada have increased their emissions by over 20%, nearly 30% since 1990. The industrial sectors in Quebec have succeeded in reducing their greenhouse gas emissions by 7%.

Sector-based intensity targets would clearly penalize companies and industrial sectors that have made efforts in the past and can show progress in fighting climate change. Not only is this intensity-based approach to climate change unfair, but it clearly jeopardizes the implementation of a carbon exchange in Canada.

The government has to understand that if it wants to set up a carbon exchange, which we support and would like to see in Montreal—I know that there is some discussion as to whether the exchange will be in Montreal or Toronto—then we must set strict reduction targets. Intensity targets will complicate Canada's implementation of a carbon exchange, a special tool allowed under the Kyoto protocol so that countries can reach their greenhouse gas emissions reduction target.

This morning, the minister appeared in committee. I asked him whether he favoured a territorial approach or a carbon exchange. His response was clear. Quebec was asking for too much. That is what the Minister of the Environment said. He made it even more clear how little he understands the establishment of a carbon exchange. This morning he told us that Quebec could not call for a territorial approach as well as a carbon exchange. It is totally illogical.

How can the minister say such things when Europe has indicated it will reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 8%? In Europe, the Kyoto protocol targets were divided territorially and the world's most innovative carbon exchange established. It is so innovative that the Montreal climate exchange signed an agreement with the European carbon exchange, a side agreement to the conference on climate exchange in Montreal.

At the economic forum in Davos on January 25, the Premier of Quebec, it will be remembered, called for such an exchange to be established as quickly as possible.

What is the government waiting for then? The Montreal exchange is waiting for the federal government. All of Quebec is waiting for the Montreal exchange to be established to help improve Canada's situation generally in the fight against climate change.

• (1215)

The government must commit as soon as possible to formulating regulations and targets for the industrial sector. It must let Quebec achieve the Kyoto protocol targets within the province and establish a carbon exchange.

There is a fourth element: the \$328 million we are demanding from the government.

The minister told us in committee this morning that he was consulting, discussing and negotiating with the Government of Quebec for the \$328 million. I have been the environment critic for years. I have seen a succession of ministers. I have seen them say no to Quebec over this significant transfer of \$328 million. The former Liberal Minister of the Environment, the former Conservative minister and the current minister have all turned a deaf ear to Quebec's demands, although it has a strategy for climate change.

With Quebecers ready to commit public funds to meeting 72% of the Kyoto targets in Quebec's plan of action we are asking Ottawa for some 30% only of the financial effort required to meet Kyoto targets, and time is a-wasting.

Business of Supply

It is odd that when we discuss, here in this House, bills such as Bill C-48, which gives tax breaks to the oil industry, things move along more quickly, bills get passed and there is agreement.

I am talking about \$250 million granted annually to the oil industry, according to the figures from the finance department. Let me quote some of them. The oil companies will have saved \$55 million in 2003-04, \$100 million in 2004-05 and \$260 million in 2007-08.

Does anyone realize that the \$328 million is the total for just two full fiscal years that the oil industry will have benefited from through Bill C-48? For 2007-08 alone, oil companies will save \$260 million, while Quebec has been negotiating for years to get \$328 million to meet Kyoto protocol targets.

We, on this side of the House, are saying that the policies of the Conservative government and of the Liberal government promote nothing less than a polluter-paid policy rather than a polluter-pay policy. This is an example. While the \$328 million would be used to fund a plan to combat climate change in Quebec, the government is saying no, but saying yes to the oil companies. This does not make sense.

The government needs to acknowledge that the Kyoto protocol targets are, for the opposition in this House—including the Bloc Québécois, of course—a non negotiable objective. The government need not expect that we will negotiate on achieving the targets in the Kyoto protocol or its inclusion in Bill C-30. We want the Kyoto protocol targets to be part of Bill C-30. Let that be clear. We feel that a refusal by the government to include them would be nothing short of a slap in the face in the fight against climate change.

Finally, giving \$328 million to Quebec has nothing to do with the tax incentives given to the oil industry. It has to do with fighting climate change and having a sustainable transportation policy in Quebec that is in line with Kyoto targets.

•(1220)

In closing, I hope members will consider this amended motion and vote in favour of it.

[*English*]

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to read a quote to the hon. member. It states: “The Government of Canada is being discriminatory and is preventing the Gaspésie from becoming an oil and gas producing region”, roared Mr. Landry of the National Assembly. ‘Had the federal government not discriminated against us, the drilling platforms would already be up and running and oil would already have started to flow’, he told reporters in *La Presse*, December 18, 2002”.

Given that complying with Kyoto requires massive reductions in CO₂ emissions, does the member support Mr. Landry's oil and gas ambitions in the Gaspé or is he willing to kill that plan? And if not, what other industry in Quebec would he be in favour of shutting down in order to comply with Kyoto?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Bernard Bigras: Mr. Speaker, I invite the member to read Quebec's energy policy. It does not say anything about oil and gas

development in the St. Lawrence. That is one important element. Quebec's position with regard to its energy policy remains and will continue to be based on the production of electricity through hydroelectric power and wind power.

I think that Quebec could contribute to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions through a carbon market. I am also thinking of New Brunswick, among others, with the Belledune plant that produces greenhouse gas emissions. I am confident that the Gaspé could, in a carbon market, sell or trade its greener electricity to a province that produces a lot of greenhouse gas emissions because of the Belledune plant that is still open, among other reasons.

Quebec's energy policy has not changed. It is based on the development of hydroelectric power and wind power, both of which are renewable energies.

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to see that my hon. colleague is very concerned about the environment. He was just telling us about renewable energies, which is very interesting.

I would like to know what he thinks about our government's strategy, which is to work more on renewable energy, biofuels and the wind sector. Does he think this is a good approach for our country?

Mr. Bernard Bigras: Mr. Speaker, we have always thought that we need to invest public funds and make them available to industries that want to develop wind power and renewable energy in Canada. The reality, though, is that the previous and current governments have always given major tax breaks to the oil industry in Canada. It was true of the previous government, it is true of this government, and it is true historically because \$66 billion have been invested since 1970 in the development of greenhouse gas emitting fossil fuels.

The problem with the federal government's announcements on renewable fuels is that they are not very well suited to the reality in Quebec. Quebec has more wind energy projects producing kilowatt hours of electricity than this program permits. The hon. member should know that the WPPI program, for example, which is supposed to encourage the development and production of electricity through wind power, includes ceilings that prevent some provinces and companies from receiving the maximum for the projects they are submitting now to the federal government.

The development of renewable energy in Canada is therefore constrained by programs that are poorly designed and inappropriate and that fail to meet the needs of industrial sectors and provinces that want to produce this energy. That is why we say that for every dollar invested, why not just transfer Quebec's share. In this way, the reduction in greenhouse gas emissions could be maximized for each dollar invested.

Business of Supply

The Conservatives always decried the Liberals, saying, “You invested billions of dollars in the fight against climate change and emissions increased by 27%”. It is not different programs we want but a different approach—one that is more efficient, more effective and fairer, and the way to do this is through a territorial approach.

For example, Quebec would be left with the task of reducing its greenhouse gas emissions by 6%. It could adopt any policies, plans and programs it wants so long as it reduces these emissions by 6%. However, the money that is transferred to Quebec and invested in the fight against climate change would probably be invested in sectors where Quebec does not do very well. Industry in Quebec has already reduced its emissions by 7%. This is not the sector we should be focusing on in Quebec but rather on transportation. This \$328 million transfer to Quebec would make it possible to invest more effectively and do a better job of reducing Quebec’s greenhouse gas emissions.

If the government want to take effective action against climate change and achieve its Kyoto targets, it should change from a sectoral approach to a territorial approach. It is not just a question of programs.

• (1225)

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will share my time with the member for Louis-Hébert.

In many comments we hear in this House concerning the government's environmental agenda, and in particular its ecoenergy renewable initiative, there is little mention of what we are actually talking about.

I would like to take this opportunity to comment on the various kinds of renewable energy with which the government's legislation is concerned. Canada is blessed with abundant energy sources, both conventional and renewable. Conventional energy sources will continue to be a large part of Canada’s energy mix. Fossil fuels are a long way from becoming dispensable. However, the share of clean renewable energy in Canada's energy mix will continue to grow.

Renewable energy has been defined in many ways. Generally speaking, it means fuel sources that produce usable energy without depleting resources, as is the case with fossil fuels, such as oil, gas and coal.

Renewable energy has also come to mean low or zero emissions of air pollutants or greenhouse gases. In accordance with this commonly accepted definition, the main sources of renewable energy are water, biomass, wind, solar and earth energy.

Using more of these energy sources to improve the environment is basically using the environment to improve the environment. This is what the ecoenergy renewable initiative is attempting to do.

Let me focus for a moment on these various clean sources.

First, there is wind energy. The energy of the wind can be converted into mechanical energy or electricity. Wind energy is an infinitely renewable form of energy. It does not require fossil fuels, and it does not produce greenhouse gases or other air pollutants.

Although people have used wind energy for thousands of years, modern wind technologies provide reliable, cost-effective, pollution-free energy for individual, community and national applications.

In good wind areas, the costs of generating electricity range between 5 and 10 cents per kilowatt hour—higher than traditional electricity generation but decreasing every year. Most conventional generation costs continue to increase.

As of November 2006, Canada’s installed wind-energy capacity was 1,341 megawatts, enough to power more than 400,000 homes. Each megawatt-hour of electricity generated by wind energy helps to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and other air pollutants that would otherwise be produced by fossil fuel-based generation.

As for solar energy, there are many ways to transform sunlight into energy. However, the main kinds are solar panels that convert sunlight directly to electricity, or photovoltaic panels, and panels that absorb heat from the sun and transfer it as space heating or water heating.

Solar energy has a number of advantages. It does not emit air pollutants or greenhouse gases. The energy from the sun is virtually unlimited and largely free once the initial cost of the installation has been recovered. Solar photovoltaic energy systems can be stand-alone or connected to a power grid.

Hydro power uses energy from flowing water to generate electricity. Hydroelectric energy is Canada’s main source of electricity, most of which comes from large projects developed by electric utilities.

Today, more small-scale hydroelectric projects are being developed. These smaller projects are often classified as small, 1 to 30 megawatts, mini, 100 kilowatts to 1 megawatt, and micro, 100 kilowatts or less. Small-scale hydro projects take up little space and do not require the construction of dams, since the turbines are generally placed directly in the flowing stream. As a result, small-scale hydro projects are much less expensive than the traditionally large hydro projects that have involved massive amounts of earth moving and the construction of large facilities.

• (1230)

Small-scale hydro can be a competitive source of clean, reliable energy. It is an especially attractive alternative to traditional high-cost diesel generation that currently provides electricity in most of Canada’s remote communities.

Two types of energy can be obtained from the earth: earth energy and geothermal energy. Geothermal energy uses steam or hot water in the earth's crust to power turbines or to heat buildings or water. If the local geography has the right features, geothermal facilities can be installed to capture steam as it escapes from cracks or holes underground. Geothermal energy requires a source temperature of more than 100°C to drive a generating turbine.

Earth energy uses the relatively constant temperature of the earth below ground or below a body of water to cool or heat air and water for buildings. For example, a heat pump can extract heat from underneath the ground to heat a building. In the summer, the pump can be reversed to provide air conditioning by moving hot air out of the building and down into the ground.

There are thousands of earth-energy installations in Canada that are used for residential, commercial, institutional and industrial applications. Depending on the source of electricity used to run the system's components, an earth-energy system can reduce greenhouse gas emissions by more than two-thirds compared to similar systems that use fossil fuels.

Bioenergy is produced by the release of chemical energy contained in fuels made from biomass. Biomass is stored solar energy in plants and many common waste products such as wastes from agriculture, forestry, municipal landfills and food processing. Biomass can supply heat, electricity and vehicle fuels such as ethanol and biodiesel.

Achieving an increased contribution of these inexhaustible energy sources to Canada's grid is what the government's ecoenergy renewable initiative is about. In particular, the government's investment of \$1.48 billion in one renewable program, ecoenergy for renewable power, aims to boost Canada's supply of renewable electricity by 4,000 megawatts.

We have discussed today the many opportunities provided by new technologies. Soon—in the short, medium or long term—Canada will have to intensify efforts in research and development to develop new sources of renewable energy so that future generations can benefit from new energy sources and supplies, allowing us to diversify. That is very important because all members of this House, including the Bloc members, I am sure, realize that fossil energies will become limited in years to come. It is very important to any seriously environment-minded government to pursue efforts to ensure that more Canadians have access to our stable and, more importantly, renewable energy resources.

If we want to rely on our environment and to have a clean and healthy environment for future generations—we can certainly not do without energy altogether—this government thinks that renewable energies are important, as one long term alternative to provide future generations with heat in the winter, air conditioning in the summer, lighting and a good life in our great and beautiful country.

• (1235)

Ms. Christiane Gagnon (Québec, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his fine presentation. However, today, we have not dealt with the subject of the motion.

The motion says:

Business of Supply

That, having recognized the principle of complying with the Kyoto targets, it is the opinion of this House that the government should provide the Government of Quebec with the sum of \$328 million to enable it to implement its plan to meet the Kyoto Protocol targets.

That is what we are debating today.

The member may have forgotten to outline the attitudes of the Liberal and Conservative governments of Canada with regard to achieving Kyoto protocol targets. The effort required was not made. Allowable limits were exceeded 30 times over.

Putting aside the member's lovely rhetoric on new energy sources—I will not go into that this morning, as it would make a good course for high school students—I believe this is a political issue.

We say that we are here to defend Quebeckers and 76% of them want the Kyoto targets to be met. The Conservative government's plan will not achieve that objective.

What does the member have to say about that? Does he believe that he is really listening to what Quebec wants? Environmental, political and economic stakeholders have asked for the \$328 million

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Andrew Scheer): The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources.

Mr. Jacques Gourde: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his good question.

In my presentation, I believe that I clearly stated that renewable energy will be important to the future of our country. We are all aware that quantities of fossil fuels will diminish in the generations to come and that we must change the balance in our consumption of fossil fuels and renewable energy. I believe that Quebeckers are very aware of this major challenge and that they look forward to tackling the challenge with other Canadians in order to have a cleaner source of energy.

Furthermore, I would like to say to my colleague that renewable energy will lead to reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, which will allow us, in the long term, to approach the targets we wish to attain for the well-being of Canadians.

• (1240)

Ms. Nicole Demers (Laval, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it appears my honourable colleague from Lotbinière—Chutes-de-la-Chaudière is very familiar with the information available all over the Internet about greenhouse gases.

But I wonder if he has taken the time to read the documentation out of Nairobi this summer, when it became clear that the only American plan receiving any praise was not the Conservatives' plan; it was Quebec's plan. Even so, his government is refusing to give Quebec the \$328 million the province needs to put that plan into action.

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Does my honourable colleague think that only his party has the right idea and that everyone else in the whole wide world is wrong?

Mr. Jacques Gourde: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for her good question.

The Conservative government is responsible for ensuring the stability of future energy sources for future generations, unlike the Bloc Québécois, which will never be able to make any decisions to help Canadians in terms of environmental or energy issues. We have to be responsible and we will do our duty.

Mr. Luc Harvey (Louis-Hébert, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government recognizes that global warming poses a serious threat to the health and well-being of Canadians.

The recent report by the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) raised the alarm yet again. The time has come to recognize that scientific support for fighting climate change has grown over the years.

I would like to make three points briefly: first, the scientific basis for mitigating climate change is well founded; second, we are already seeing the effects of climate change; third, we must be ready to deal with other effects in the years to come. Some of these effects are inevitable, and we will have to adapt.

When we look at the science of climate change, we cannot fail but notice that climate experts from the world over agree on a number of points. First, the levels of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere are increasing. Since the start of the industrial revolution, concentrations of carbon dioxide have increased from 280 parts per million to nearly 380 parts per million—an increase of 35%. This figure is higher than any figure collected from ice cores, data which date back several hundreds of thousands of years. Scientists have concluded without a doubt that the increase in carbon dioxide is the result of human activity, primarily the consumption of fossil fuels, which releases annually thousands of tonnes of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. Concentrations of greenhouse gases, such as methane and nitrous oxides, have also increased considerably over the same period. We also know that concentrations of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere will continue to climb. In the case of carbon dioxide—CO₂—the figure will be some 2 parts per million per year unless we do something to cut our emissions. This is why the new government intends to act. As the Prime Minister said on February 6, the government will regulate atmospheric pollution from the major industrial sectors for the first time. It will also regulate the energy efficiency of motor vehicles for the first time starting with 2011 models. Furthermore, for the very first time, the government will make regulations for the short, medium and long terms. These measures will benefit all the provinces in Canada, including Quebec.

Scientists also agree that the temperatures of the earth's surface have increased by some 0.7 degrees Celsius over the past century. Recent decades have been the hottest in several hundred years, and the 1990s were the hottest decade in the past one hundred years, with 1998 being the hottest year on record. This evidence indicates clearly the recent temperature increases are very unusual.

As my colleague from Simcoe—Grey pointed out last week, the increases in temperatures we are experiencing have resulted in changes, such as fewer icebergs; infestations of mountain pine beetles, which have had a disastrous impact on the BC forest

industry; the drought in recent years on the Prairies, which has cost the farm economy billions of dollars; extreme weather conditions on the west coast in recent months and an early but exceptionally mild winter on the east coast. Although these phenomena cannot be attributed individually to climate change, they are however in keeping with scientists' forecasts on the potential for other extreme weather phenomena.

What can we expect in the future, according to the scientific community? First, we can expect greenhouse gas concentrations to continue to rise, to double, even triple, before the end of the century. To avoid these increases, drastic measures will have to be taken to reduce our emissions. That is why Canada's new government will see that greenhouse gas emissions are regulated in the main industrial sectors. The age of voluntary compliance is over: I would emphasize that fact.

● (1245)

Second, having applied sophisticated digital climate system models to a spectrum of possible future greenhouse gas trajectories, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change says that we can expect the temperature of the earth to increase several degrees by 2100.

That sort of temperature increase, at that sort of speed, has never been seen in the past 10,000 years. Note that this period is one of the most relevant to us, for this is the period when human civilization evolved.

As I was saying earlier, the concerns are not limited to changes in average temperature: there is also the greater frequency and severity of extreme meteorological conditions and phenomena, such as floods, droughts, heat waves and winter and summer storms.

Given the changes already observed and the changes we can foresee, it is clear that we have to take the necessary steps to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions. It is also imperative that we start preparing ourselves for the changes to come, start preparing to adapt. Since greenhouse gases remain in the atmosphere for many decades, even after emissions are reduced, we will have to face other changes of climate and we will have to put in place the measures necessary to adapt to those changes.

In summary, the Government of Canada is extremely concerned by climate change, and recognizes that there is sufficient evidence to justify the adoption of tough measures for confronting the problem and beginning to manage the risks posed by climate change.

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The new report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change provides conclusive additional evidence that the climate has changed, that human activity is the cause, and that we can expect unprecedented changes in the future.

It is imperative that we take the necessary measures immediately, and that is what the new government is doing. The children of Canada, the children of Quebec, deserve to grow up in a world where they can breathe clean air and drink clean water. In short, as the Prime Minister said, Canadians and Quebecers will be able to enjoy a country that is cleaner, greener and healthier.

Mr. Bernard Bigras (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to the member's speech, which came essentially from the reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. That is not the only kind of speech we expect from the member opposite. He does not have to convince us of the existence of climate change. We, on this side of the House, have long understood that climate change is important and that it is linked to human activity.

We want to know if the member intends to support the motion brought forward by the Bloc Québécois calling for a \$328 million transfer to the province of Quebec for the implementation of its plan to fight climate change. Quebec is prepared to finance 72% of the work. We are asking the federal government to make an effort, to stop giving tax incentives to the oil and gas industry, and to give the \$328 million to Quebec, which truly wishes to fight climate change.

Can he answer our question?

• (1250)

Mr. Luc Harvey: Mr. Speaker, I always take great pleasure in answering questions.

That being said, we are talking about tax incentives for the oil industry. Perhaps my colleague has never worked in the private sector. Depreciation always has to be taken into account in any investment we make. Hundreds of billions of dollars have been invested and, as is the case in any other industry, depreciation has to be taken into account. I do not see why there would be a difference between depreciation in the oil industry, in the forest industry or in any other industry. This is the most basic business rule.

Ms. Christiane Gagnon (Québec, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I will ask him a simple question. That way he will stay on topic when answering.

Is he prepared to vote for the Bloc Québécois motion that calls on the federal government to provide \$328 million enabling Quebec to implement its plan for meeting Kyoto protocol targets for greenhouse gas reductions? Yes or no?

That is straightforward. I have asked a simple question and I hope he will not go off on a tangent.

Mr. Luc Harvey: Mr. Speaker, with regard to the Kyoto protocol measures, my Bloc Québécois colleague on the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development knows quite well that we heard from almost 30 witnesses and not 80%, not 90%, but 100% formally confirmed that Kyoto protocol targets cannot be met within the prescribed timeframes. My colleague was there and will be able to confirm this.

Ms. Nicole Demers (Laval, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I will make the question even simpler. Will he vote for or against the Bloc Québécois motion?

Mr. Luc Harvey: Mr. Speaker, how my friends amuse me. We are talking about solving the fiscal imbalance in the next budget. It may be better to curb our zeal. If the matter was so urgent, why did our Bloc Québécois colleague vote against having additional meetings for the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development? Why did he vote to send Bill C-288 to the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development? Was it an attempt to waste the government's time on the report on Bill C-30 that was to be tabled? Why did he invite a ton of witnesses? Again, was it to delay Bill C-30? My Bloc Québécois friends and colleagues make me laugh when they puff themselves up and turn on the dramatics because when it comes time to take action, they slam on the brakes.

Mr. André Bellavance (Richmond—Arthabaska, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Brome—Missisquoi.

I am pleased to take part in this important debate on the environment. It is a wide-ranging subject, but with this motion, we have decided to focus on Quebec's specific request. The Government of Quebec has long been calling on the federal government to provide it with \$328 million so that it can meet its Kyoto protocol targets.

To remind hon. members exactly what we are talking about, I will read the motion, because we were treated to 20 minutes of rather academic speeches. I could see that you were very interested in what was said, Mr. Speaker. I felt that, for two government members, they did not outline any very concrete measures, although they did tell us that climate change was very important. We already know this, but I would have expected them to answer the question that was just asked—are they going to vote for or against the motion?—especially since they are government members from Quebec. Will they vote for this motion to give the Government of Quebec the \$328 million it is owed, to help it implement its plan to comply with Kyoto? The motion reads as follows:

That, having recognized the principle of complying with the Kyoto targets, it is the opinion of this House that the government should provide the Government of Quebec with the sum of \$328 million to enable it to implement its plan to meet the Kyoto Protocol targets.

This motion is crucial to Quebec, which already has its own green plan, as hon. members know, but which lacks that sum of \$328 million that will allow it to reach its target of reducing greenhouse gas emissions to 6% below 1990 levels.

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I come from the Bois-Francs area, which has long been known as a cradle for sustainable development. It is the birthplace of Normand Maurice, who is the father of recycling and recovery. This region is where the Lemaire family is from; they set up the Industries Cascades. As you can see, I am acutely aware that I am representing a region and a population that have long understood the importance of the environment and, likewise, sustainable development.

As elsewhere in Quebec, the people in my region support the fight against climate change. I want to remind hon. members that a survey conducted just a few days ago, at the end of January, for *The Globe and Mail* and CTV, showed that nearly 80% of Quebecers find that the government must make the necessary efforts to meet the Kyoto protocol targets. I imagine that the predecessors of the Conservative government who responded to the survey were not part of this 80%, but, in fact, a majority of Quebecers understand the situation and want governments to take action.

While it has become fashionable to claim to want to protect the environment, I would like to remind hon. members of the work done by the Bloc Québécois, its environment critic in particular, the hon. member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, who I commend. While listening to him earlier, I realized how effective his educational work is. His explanations and actions spell out the situation quite clearly and show us why the Government of Quebec is making this request. He drives a hybrid car. I think it is important to point out that he may not put the pedal to the metal, but he can drive at a respectable enough speed while saving fuel and protecting the environment at the same time. Far from slamming on the brakes, my colleague from Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie has done a tremendous amount of work in this House. Without him, we would be far from where we are today on a number of bills and measures. I wish to acknowledge the work he has done here.

I was a candidate in 2000 and, even then, the Bloc Québécois electoral platform emphasized the need to implement measures for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Again today, the Bloc Québécois is proposing tough greenhouse gas emission standards for vehicles, discounts on the purchase of ecological vehicles, significant financial support for development of renewable energy sources—especially wind power—and an end to the tax system that favours the oil companies. The Conservative member from the Quebec region who spoke earlier seemed to be quite offended that we are calling for abolition of a tax system that favours the oil companies, as though those people could not survive these days. It is a little bit like saying that perhaps we should be helping the banks and giving them subsidies. It is the same principle. We also are proposing funding for organizations that contribute to the achievement of the Kyoto protocol targets.

That is what the Bloc Québécois is calling for in its platform. We are where we are today because of my colleague, the member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, who has worked for so long, and obviously the whole Bloc Québécois team and its members, meeting in convention, who have recognized for a long time how important the environment is for all of us.

•(1255)

Once again today, I am proud to carry the colours of a party that so ardently defends the need to take real measures to reduce

greenhouse gas emissions and to achieve the Kyoto protocol targets through concrete actions, as I have said, such as putting forward this motion.

It is not enough to put on a green scarf at a leadership convention to suddenly become a great defender of the environment, as the leader of the Liberal Party of Canada did. We all remember that image. We said that all of a sudden he was a “green” man. His scarf was green, but as for the rest, we must look at the actions that have been taken.

It was under his stewardship, while he was Minister of the Environment, that greenhouse gas emissions in Canada increased by 24%. I am talking about the time since 1993 because, earlier, my colleague spoke of an increase of 27% since 1990. It seems to me that to date, since the Liberals came to power, we have had a 24% increase in greenhouse gas emissions while the Kyoto target, as I recall, was a reduction of 6%. It is a disaster, a monumental failure. Yes, you can put on a green scarf. That might protect you against the cold; but that does not make you a great defender of the environment. The voluntary approach of the Liberals is a failure.

What is there to say about the Conservative government? Elected just over a year ago, it presented its five priorities—as we all recall—but the environment was not one of them.

As agriculture critic, I often speak with farmers about all the things that are going on in the House of Commons. I tell them often that this government has five priorities. The priorities of the entire population of Quebec people and the entire population of Canada are not necessarily the priorities of the Conservative government. It talks of law and order, and of all manner of things, but not of agriculture or the environment. In campaigning for election, I often tell the people of my riding “Your priorities are my priorities, and I will transmit those priorities on your behalf to the House of Commons.” I cannot understand how a government can be so insensitive as not to grasp that the priorities of the population must be its priorities, because its members represent the population. They were sent here for a reason: to represent the population.

As has been said, with reference to the supporting survey, the public has long been prepared and long been aware of how important it is to deal with climate change. That, however, was not a priority for the government in place, the self-proclaimed “new government”. The new aspect was that the environment is not a priority. If something like that were a new product on the market, I can tell you that it would not exactly be flying off the store shelves.

As a result of the polls just referred to, of public opinion, of the work of the Bloc Québécois and the work of the other opposition parties—also needing to be mentioned—the Prime Minister has just added the environment to his priorities. High time too, considering this government was sworn in a little over a year ago. All of a sudden, they are saying the environment is a priority. I do not know how sincere this is. It is a bit suspect, particularly when it comes to actions actually taken to make the environment a true priority.

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We still need to act, as other industrial countries have done. Germany and the United Kingdom come to mind. My hon. colleague from Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie is certainly in a better position than I am to talk about what is happening elsewhere, for example in Europe. I do know, however, even if I am less of an expert than he is in this area, that some industrialized countries have been able to meet the Kyoto targets after signing the protocol. So why not us? Often, one compares oneself to console oneself, but here in Canada, that is not at all the case. Political will is needed, to truly invest in the fight against climate change. That is what must be done. That is what certain countries have done.

Economically speaking, the recent report prepared by Nicholas Stern, the former World Bank chief economist, recommends that every country should immediately invest up to 1% of its GDP in the fight against climate change in order to avoid future economic losses that could exceed \$7,000 billion world-wide. It is hard to even imagine such a figure. That is a sum 20 times higher than the cost needed to reverse the trends. So, let us reverse the trends, because that will cost a lot less than sitting here with our arms crossed and both feet on the brakes, as suggested earlier by a Conservative colleague, referring to us.

• (1300)

I think he was merely projecting. It is the Conservative government, rather, that is slamming on the brakes when it comes to the environment.

Why can other countries do it, but not ours? Yet, Canada ratified the Kyoto protocol in 2002. As I was saying, both the Liberals and the Conservatives have failed. Their inaction is shaming us on the international stage. Quebec has a plan. It needs \$328 million more, which the Liberals and Conservatives refuse to give.

Quebec wants to implement a plan that suits its situation. If the federal government is serious about its desire to reduce greenhouse gases, the Bloc Québécois calls on the government to take a simple but effective action: vote in favour of this motion and give \$328 million to the Quebec government.

• (1305)

Mr. Bernard Bigras (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for Richmond—Arthabaska for his speech, both as an MP and also as Bloc Québécois agriculture and agri-food critic.

I have a few examples of how farmers are also prepared to take part in programs to fight climate change. We have approximately 44,000 farmers in Quebec. I know that, since 1990, they have used their own money to implement environmental protection programs. Since 2003, 11,000 of these 44,000 farmers have supported a greenhouse gas reduction program. This proves that all sectors of Quebec society are prepared to commit to the fight against climate change.

My second example is that of Cascades, which is in my colleague's riding. This company—together with the Desjardins movement, business people and the mayor of Montreal—sent a clear message to the federal government that it wants the Kyoto protocol targets to be met.

My question for my colleague is as follows: is it not obvious—as we are told daily by business—that fighting climate change and protecting the environment do not run counter to significant economic development in Quebec?

Can he tell us if he believes that environmental protection represents a constraint on economic development or, on the contrary, does it provide economic opportunities for Quebec's development? I believe this is important.

Mr. André Bellavance: Mr. Speaker, my colleague just summed up the situation very well. In Québec, we have trailblazers like the Cascades company and farmers. They realized non-sustainable development was not an option. Indeed, our society needs to develop, but we cannot use our resources needlessly just to make a profit. True enough, you can make money with a short-term vision. But as my colleague said, we realized in the agricultural industry that if you exhaust the land, if you use up all your products and everything from which you earn a living, it will some day come to an end, for generations to come.

We must take care of the environment. Farmers being on the land and working on the land are probably the first ones who realized it was important to preserve all we have, not only for environmental but also for economic reasons.

Obviously, not everybody in the business community resorts to reckless development, quite the contrary. And Cascades is a fine example.

Mr. Luc Harvey (Louis-Hébert, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I read lately that China is considering the construction of 2,300 new coal-fired power plants, that is one new plant every 10 days. Carbon emissions would increase not by megatonnes, but by teratonnes.

One of the hon. member's colleagues is whispering an answer to him, because he might not be able to find one by himself.

So, China is planning some 2,300 new power plants. China has ratified the Kyoto protocol, which my friends in the Bloc raise as a flag all the time. But China is going to release teratonnes of CO₂, something which will cancel out all the Canadian efforts in no time.

But this gentleman is nonetheless suggesting—and repeating—that the Kyoto protocol is the only way to improve our environment.

How does he explain that? How are we supposed to counteract these Chinese CO₂ emissions that will have an impact in Canada and Quebec?

Mr. André Bellavance: Mr. Speaker, if I understand correctly the twisted logic of the member who just asked a question, since other countries do not care for the environment and do not respect the Kyoto protocol and decided not to sign on, we should stay put, slam on the brakes and just say that China will send us its pollution anyway. As the member tried to say jokingly, there is no use in raising the Kyoto flag.

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On the contrary, it is important for us to act. I have always seen that, in international negotiations, money talks. Because China is now a member of the WTO, it is important for us to make it understand that trading has a price in terms of environment protection and workers' rights. These are things that we must learn and we must convince our trading partners that they should too. Moreover, in our own country and in Quebec also, we must respect the Kyoto protocol to set an example. We should not say that nothing can be done just because some countries are polluters.

• (1310)

Mr. Christian Ouellet (Brome—Missisquoi, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to remind my colleagues from Louis-Hébert and from Beauport—Limoilou that they ought perhaps to start by reading the wording of the motion. Even if my colleagues have repeated the motion, they still appear to be speaking about something else. Yet this motion is what we want to talk about today. We want to know whether respecting the objectives of the Kyoto protocol will include the \$328 million that Quebec needs to implement that protocol. We are not asking whether or not they are in favour of the Kyoto protocol. We want the agreement respected, and we want the \$328 million transferred to Quebec. That is the point.

Of course, one could go back in time and say that the Liberals are as blameworthy as the Conservatives in this situation. The nation of Quebec has made different choices than the rest of Canada, and these choices must be respected. They were made a very long time ago. We consider Quebec to be the nation that has always promoted the Kyoto protocol, right from the get go.

Now I will respond to the member for Louis-Hébert and his recent comments on China. Let us recall how the Kyoto protocol was reached. In order to come into effect, it needed to be ratified by 55 countries, or ones representing 55% of total greenhouse gas emissions according to 1990 levels.

There are, therefore, four categories of country as far as Kyoto protocol commitments are concerned. There are the ones that have done nothing, like the U.S. and Australia which have signed but never ratified. We will come back to the reasons for that later. Then there are those that have ratified and made commitments to reduce, like Canada, Germany, Japan, Europe and so on. Lastly, there are the countries that have ratified—I do mean to say ratified—but that are not required to take any measures for the first period only, from 2008 to 2010. These are China, India and Brazil, which have also ratified the Kyoto protocol and will make a commitment to it.

The power plants will not have been built by 2010 anyway. China will definitely be seeking and finding new technologies in order to avoid greenhouse gas emissions, because it is going to respect the agreements it has signed.

As I said, it was very hard for Canada to accept this Kyoto protocol agreement. Luckily Quebec has always been the nation to exert pressure on Canada. Otherwise we are convinced that we would not even be this far yet. But all the industrialized countries have implemented it.

In February 2003, Tony Blair said it was clear that Kyoto is not radical enough. Those were his words. And the Conservatives admire what England does. Its objective is a 60% reduction by 2050, but unlike the Conservatives, England began to take action as soon

as this announcement was made. Consequently it will have to take significant measures in the areas of transportation, industry and building.

In 2004 Tony Blair returned to the charge, saying that reductions would be stepped up, that they were going further. That led to the elimination of non-sustainable policies. All the policies adopted by the government thought to be non-sustainable, inconsistent with sustainable development, were going to be eliminated starting in 2004.

The Prime Minister prefers to align himself with Bush rather than Quebec or Blair. In the summer of 2005, Bush won a very important vote to stop a decisive law, and he went on listening to the anti-Kyoto lobbyists. Bush sought support for his pro-oil designs. So we can see where the Prime Minister's influence came from in 2006. In fact he was influenced by Mr. Bush in 2005.

• (1315)

The scientific uncertainty has not been an issue for a long time now. This is no longer something that people can use. We often hear the Conservatives say that it is not known for sure whether scientists agree on the subject. The detractors always use this argument, saying that we do not know exactly how long it will be before global temperatures rise. That is true, but only the detractors use this argument. One thing is certain, and it is that climate change has begun. Whether we are talking about global warming of 2°, 3° or 4° does not matter. What matters is knowing that climate change will affect civilization, our way of living, and much more than terrorism. Quebecers are convinced of this.

By dithering, the government is slowing us down. The hypothesis that warmer temperatures will bring benefits is a myth. That is what we heard, though, a while ago, from the members on the other side of the House. By going from 550 ppm of CO₂ in the atmosphere to 700 ppm of CO₂, the changes will be there in any case. Our way of living and our civilization will be affected. That is what Quebec believes.

The oil lobby is the great promoter of this myth, and it influences the Prime Minister and his cabinet. That influences even the Quebec members who are willing to vote with the rest of Canada in favour of oil development. This is where it becomes obvious that the Quebec Conservatives do not have any power. They only appear to be in power. In reality, they just vote the way the cabinet tells them. They do not vote how the vast majority of Quebecers want them to. Quebecers want the Kyoto protocol implemented. Even the federalist Liberal government in Quebec wants it. The Conservatives, though, will vote against it. Is that what being in power means for Quebec Conservatives? If so, it is pretty bad.

The oil industry started criticizing the Kyoto protocol in April 1998. The first Kyoto protocol agreement was signed in 1997. That was when oil industry lobbyists put their first ad in the *New York Times*. Millions of dollars were invested and new research institutes, such as the George C. Marshall Institute, the Cato Institute, the Friends of Science and the Competitive Enterprise Institute, sprang up and hired scientists to disparage Kyoto. Their influence was felt in Canada. Other scientists were trained here in Canada to persuade people that oil is very important for life on this planet. The Standing Committee on Natural Resources still welcomes these lobbyists, who say that oil is synonymous with Canada's survival and greenhouse gases do not matter.

These institutes found scientists who were heavily paid to become detractors. They succeeded, because the Conservatives see in them a plot against Kyoto. The Liberals too did not transfer the necessary funds to Quebec. So they are kind of similar.

Last spring on May 3, 2006, the *Washington Post* rejoiced over the cuts Canada was making to its programs to reduce greenhouse gases, claiming that Canada was getting the message of the oil industry lobby and was going over the heads of its people. That is why we lost a year. Quebec lost a year in the implementation of its program because the \$328 million did not flow. One year with nothing new in Quebec. One year without more energy efficiency. One year without promoting clean energy. One year in which Quebec had to be pulling back on the reins. The Bush lobby and the oil lobby lost Quebec a year. Will this government now be responsible to Quebec?

• (1320)

Mr. Bernard Bigras (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his speech on the opposition motion of the Bloc Québécois.

I know that the hon. member sits on the Standing Committee on Natural Resources. I would like him to explain to us how the development of the oil sands in Canada can directly contradict the commitments Canada made in Kyoto to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 6%.

I would like him to explain to us how Canada can encourage the oil sands industry by giving it tax presents, while saying out of the other side of its mouth on the international stage, as in Nairobi, that it intends to comply with the objectives of the Kyoto protocol. In his view, is there a contradiction between development of the oil sands and compliance with the Kyoto protocol?

Mr. Christian Ouellet: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie for his excellent question.

Indeed, people—even academics—have met with us to argue that the oil sands are something extraordinary for the Canadian economy. I am sure they were not talking about the Quebec economy, because it is something negative in Quebec. As they see it, the economy should take precedence over everything else, even the health of the planet. For them it was the most important thing in the world.

Certain people are in the process of forever ruining the land in Alberta. We are trying to see how it might be possible to plant again on this land, but we do not know how it can be done. Over the last three years, one third of the increase in greenhouse gases has been

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due to the oil sands. Where are we at? We are at one million gallons per day. We were not supposed to be reaching that level until 2015. We are at one million gallons per day. And the government is now entertaining the idea of going up to 5 million gallons per day. Imagine. Greenhouse gases will increase fivefold.

However, it is possible to capture greenhouse gases, or CO₂. Research is ongoing at the moment, and certain companies have told us that they are ready. However, the companies do not want to invest in this. They want the government to invest. We think it unfair that Quebeckers should pay 25% of their income tax to capture the greenhouse gases of the very rich western oil companies that are making phenomenal profits.

We know it, and it was said last week. We are talking about billions of dollars in profits. Even if from now until 2010 it would cost only \$7.5 billion to capture all the CO₂, they want the government to pay. We hope that the government will find some backbone and say that the polluter has to pay, and the party doing the paying will have to be the oil companies.

Mr. Robert Carrier (Alfred-Pellan, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would also like to congratulate my colleague from Brome—Missisquoi on his remarks, and to go back to the proposal before the House today. An important part of Canada, which is the Quebec nation, intends to abide by the Kyoto protocol. My colleague has very well explained the predicament this government is in. It is looking for all sorts of excuses to avoid respecting an agreement that has been signed by our government.

But the Quebec government, which represents Quebeckers, is ready to implement the Kyoto protocol, provided it gets the share of funding that should come from the federal government. This is the substance of what we are suggesting.

What does the hon. member think of the fact that the Canadian government is refusing to give this money, something which would be a gesture of good faith to make Canada work and help one of its component parts set a fine example for other provinces to follow?

• (1325)

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

Indeed, it is hard to understand why the present government would not like Quebec to succeed in reducing its greenhouse gas emissions. If you look at our level of emissions per capita, it is already the lowest in Canada.

We could keep up this effort and become a model for all of Canada to follow. Other provinces could follow suit.

Is jealousy involved? I doubt it. It is not possible. But in Quebec, we are trying to forge ahead. Between 1990 and 2004, we had the lowest percentage increase, compared to an average rate of 6.1%. Only Newfoundland had a slightly lower rate, and they deserve our congratulations for that.

*Business of Supply**[English]*

Hon. Shawn Murphy (Charlottetown, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be given the opportunity to speak today on this particular motion. I will be voting yes to the motion with a caveat or a reservation. I will develop that reservation in my remarks. Climate change and the Kyoto accord are very important issues and I do appreciate the opportunity to say a few words.

There has been a lot said in the House and outside the House on the whole issue of climate change and Kyoto, and whether this country should continue in its efforts to meet the Kyoto accord. As an assembly we have to sit back and look at the whole thing in perspective and the background of this accord.

The Kyoto accord was signed by well over 100 different countries. It is an international treaty. It took approximately 10 years to develop the accord. The accord involved a lot of time, energy, effort and resources. I would equate it to herding a hundred cats into a room. Then, after the tremendous effort of many international players, there was an accord signed and certain greenhouse gas emission targets were agreed upon on a worldwide basis. The accord has to be implemented on a worldwide basis.

It was hoped at the time that the accord would not pit country versus country, industry against industry, developed parts of the world versus the developing parts of the world, and the rural areas of the various countries against the urban areas, but everyone would put their shoulder to the wheel and be involved. It was hoped that everyone would support the accord and, as a result, greenhouse gases would be reduced.

There has been a lot of talk over the years about Kyoto. There has been a lot of talk in the House. I submit that it is no longer debatable. We have moved beyond debate. The science is clear that this is a very serious issue that has to be resolved by the people living on this planet that we call Earth.

However, we do still have naysayers in this country and in North America. I was reading a poll not that long ago and on a Canada-wide basis approximately 5% of people do not believe in the concept of climate change and Kyoto. However, 11% of the population still believe Elvis is alive.

George Bush is one of those naysayers. To the shame of this country our Prime Minister is one of those people that does not believe in the Kyoto accord. It is documented by the record that the Prime Minister spent his entire working life fighting or in his words “going to the wall” against this particular accord. This was the fight of his life. The Prime Minister went out and he raised thousands and thousands of dollars to assist him and his party on this fight of his life. He promised that he would not implement the Kyoto accord. This was a solemn promise that he made to the Canadian people.

When Canadians look back I think they can say that our Prime Minister has attained a reasonable amount of success in this promise. There are many promises that have not been fulfilled to the Canadian people, whether it is child care, wait times, the Ontario agreement, income trusts, the equalization agreements and so forth. The pile is getting bigger. On the issue of climate change I think we can put it down as a promise made and a promise delivered. He promised he would not implement it and the first thing the Prime Minister did

when was sworn in as our Prime Minister was that he revoked our commitment to the Kyoto accord. He said that the country would turn its back to the Kyoto accord and the international agreements that Canada made.

We as people who make public policy have to realize that there are so many levers at our disposal. There is no switch here in Ottawa where we can turn the temperature down. We have to use all the levers at our disposal.

● (1330)

I have always thought that the first lever that has to be started is public education. We have to convince the public, and I think that has probably been done, that this is a serious issue and that it warrants a very serious effort on our part.

We also have to incentivize our industries, people, associations and organizations to get involved, especially those industries and people that need assistance in adapting their industries, jobs and lives to the new reality.

Under the previous government, a number of programs were developed. One that was in the process of being implemented was the partnership program. It was a government to government cost sharing initiative to invest in technologies and infrastructure development important in lowering levels of greenhouse gases. I am talking about an initiative that was federal government to provincial government and also federal government to municipal government. I am talking of clean coal technology, carbon dioxide capture and storage, ethanol, and the creation of an east to west energy grid.

A number of agreements were signed under the partnership program, but let me go on to the third point. Governments of course have the right, and the obligation too, I submit, to legislate and to regulate so that we as a country meet our commitments. We have to do it.

There have been discussions recently about the Alberta energy industry, the car industry, different industries, and the coal industry in Canada and worldwide, but we have to get beyond that. Everyone has to be involved in this process. If there is oil that is drilled in the province of Saskatchewan, refined in Alberta and goes into a car that is made in Ontario and is being driven in Quebec, we cannot divide that up into four or five different provinces. This is a countrywide problem that we have to solve on a countrywide basis. We have to get beyond that particular discussion.

To go back to the partnership program agreement, I thought at the time that it was an excellent agreement, because this is one of the levers. A lot of the initiatives that have to come about to solve this particular problem have to be at the provincial and municipal levels, and this was an incentive. They were going to take advantage of this. The province of Ontario took advantage of it. It signed an agreement. It was a government to government agreement whereby Ontario and the Government of Canada signed an agreement—and not the Liberal government but the Government of Canada—for \$538 million to eliminate certain coal-powered stations over the next couple of years.

Business of Supply

The province where I come from signed an agreement to put in an electrical cable from New Brunswick to Prince Edward Island. Again, that was all part of this east-west energy grid that would have helped us out immensely, but what happened after the present government got in? First it cancelled our commitment to the Kyoto accord. More seriously, it went ahead and cancelled 92% of all programs dealing with climate change. Of course the Ontario agreement, the \$538 million, went on the chopping block, and then there was the \$12 million. These were signed agreements. The cable also went on the chopping block, very unfortunately.

The motion before us talks about \$328 million. I am going to get to my reservation or caveat. We are talking about \$328 million going to the province of Quebec to implement its plan to meet the Kyoto targets. I assume it would be the intent of the mover of the motion that this fund would come from the partnership initiative or a similar type of program whereby we can have government to government agreements, but, and this is my caveat, that this has to meet with the objectives of the Governments of Canada and Quebec.

• (1335)

Having said that, I have extreme confidence in the province of Quebec and I have confidence in the people who live in Quebec. They seem to be ahead of the curve on this particular issue. They have done a lot and I believe they certainly understand the issue clearly. They understand what has to be done and it would appear from everything we read and everything we hear that they are prepared to do it.

On that basis, I am certainly prepared to support the motion. I hope the motion passes, but I also hope the finance minister does not just cut a cheque. The funds would have to be for a certain agreed upon program that is developed between the province of Quebec and Canada, which I am totally confident will be developed very quickly.

I have talked about the broad brushes here and am very pleased to be supporting the motion, but again, we are talking about a larger issue, and the way this country is heading is very disturbing. I am very disturbed as a member of Parliament about what we are not doing with respect to this particular accord. We are getting into a shouting match. It is 1:40 p.m. now and in 40 minutes members will be shouting and screaming at each other in the House as to who is to blame. Some members will be screaming that we cannot implement Kyoto because we cannot meet our targets. Some members will scream back and say that we can.

However, this is a process. If, because of political issues or other reasons, the country cannot meet its targets, we do not turn our back on the people who live here. We do not turn our back on the world. We do not turn our back on the other countries. We explain it to the 100 and some countries that signed the agreement with us. It is a process. Maybe it will take us two years beyond 2012 to meet our agreed upon targets. That would be disappointing, but it would not be the end of the world. What would be more disappointing and shameful would be for us to say that we cannot meet the targets by 2012 so we will forget about them.

It would be disappointing and shameful to say that we are going to forget about Kyoto and climate change, to say that we are prepared to turn our back on the other countries and the people who live in those countries. I find that totally shameful.

We will be into that discussion in 40 minutes. To the shame of this assembly, in 40 minutes we are going to hear the words I have just mentioned, because members are going to be pointing fingers and screaming at each other. I suggest that we stop screaming for 10 minutes. I suggest that we just sit back and, instead of pointing fingers, say that whatever we can do, we will do.

First of all, we have to acknowledge the international agreement that we signed in good faith with 100-plus other countries. That has to be the condition precedent to any discussion. If we are not prepared to do that, then we are a shameful country. I hope reason and common sense will prevail in this House. I hope that we will sign the agreement, get to work and do what, first, we agreed to do and, second, what we should do.

Those are my remarks. I hope the motion passes. I hope the funding will be made available to the province of Quebec. As I said before, I have extreme confidence in the province on this particular issue. Again, this is just one small step in the larger issue, but I hope we can get on with it. I hope the motion passes and the plans develop, and I hope the funds are transferred as soon as possible.

• (1340)

Mr. Alan Tonks (York South—Weston, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my colleague's overview with respect to the partnership fund. I appreciate also the thrust of his comments that the initiative taken by the Bloc with respect to the funding to bolster Kyoto strategies in the province of Quebec is worthy of support.

However, while my colleague has stated the broader context for the partnership fund very well, I would like to give him the opportunity to expand on that a little, because I am not sure the tremendous work that went into the partnership fund is fully understood by Canadians or even by members of the House.

To illustrate that, I would like to point out that budget 2005 had booked \$250 million for those kinds of projects across the country, projects that would be partnerships between the federal and provincial governments. An additional \$1 billion was in the green budget to expand upon that and we know that certainly did not go ahead. Also, it was evident that the province of Ontario was written to by the Minister of Finance to confirm that he was reneging on \$5.6 billion in funding as part of the commitment of the Canada-Ontario agreement.

Does the member see that even to support the Quebec initiative is very, very far removed from both the spirit and the very comprehensive nature across this country of what that partnership fund was designed to do, which was, in a visionary way, to attempt to establish a very broad, sector by sector, province by province comprehensive strategy to get buy-in on a Kyoto strategy?

I would like the member to comment not only with respect to where he would like to see the support for Quebec, but also with respect to where he could see a real partnership fund progressing if it were within the context of the approach, both in spirit and in strategy, that had been put forward by the previous Liberal government.

Hon. Shawn Murphy: Mr. Speaker, the member has elaborated on the substance of the program in perhaps a better manner than I have.

Business of Supply

Again, though, I will point out that the federal government, in implementing the Kyoto accord, has only certain levers at its disposal. It is very important that we use each and every lever we have. A lot of the actual greenhouse gas emissions are the bailiwick or in the jurisdiction of the provincial or municipal governments. We have to work with those other levels of government to create the opportunities and the incentives so that everyone will put their shoulder to the wheel.

This was a perfect program. It was just getting off the ground. The member who asked the question is from Ontario. I know that a \$538 million agreement was signed by the Ontario government and the Government of Canada, and these agreements do not get worked out in 48 hours. Anyone who is an executive knows that it takes months to negotiate the terms, the conditions, the parameters and the timelines as to when the \$538 million will be spent, how it will be spent, and what the deliverables are.

As I said, there was a smaller agreement in my province, but again, that agreement with the province of Prince Edward Island was thrown off the back of the truck. It was cancelled.

This was a terrific program. It was just getting going. It was not going to be the be-all and the end-all, but it was one item in the arsenal the government was using to solve this problem. It is so disappointing to see everything abandoned and to see it disappear as if the problem does not exist.

• (1345)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Marcel Lussier (Brossard—La Prairie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup.

Although Canada ratified the Kyoto protocol on December 17, 2002, after a majority vote in the House of Commons, and the government thereby committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions in Canada by 6% from the 1990 level between 2008 and 2012, Canada's record on greenhouse gas emissions is not a glowing one.

In 2004, Canada emitted 26% more greenhouse gases. To reach the target of 6% less than 1990, Canada will have to eliminate over 200 megatonnes of greenhouse gases, or nearly 32.5%. Liberals and Conservatives are both to blame for this sorry situation.

Quebec itself has made very different choices. Between 1990 and 2004, it experienced an increase of barely 6% in its greenhouse gases, four times less than the Canadian national average. Quebec continues to show leadership, with its plan to combat climate disturbances, which incorporates all of the targets in the Kyoto agreement.

The greenhouse gas emissions picture is often cited. Quebec still holds the record when it comes to greenhouse gases, in terms of the minimum produced per capita. It produces approximately 12 tonnes per capita, about half the Canadian average. If we exclude Quebec, for what is called the ROC, the rest of Canada, that 23.7 tonnes per capita average climbs to 27.2 tonnes.

While greenhouse gas emissions in Quebec were rising by barely 6%, they grew by 39% in Alberta, and by 61% in Saskatchewan. It is often said that the decision to opt for hydroelectric energy has

contributed greatly to Quebec's enviable performance. The collective choices made by the public, by their industries and by the National Assembly, however, are also contributors.

Emissions from Quebec manufacturing industries fell by 7% from 1990 to 2002. The pulp and paper industry reduced its emissions by 18%. The Quebec inventory of greenhouse gases in 2002 illustrates how emissions are distributed in Quebec by industry. We see that the transportation industry is the largest source of emissions, representing 38% of total emissions in Quebec. Road transportation alone accounts for 85% of emissions in the transportation industry, which is why it is important for Quebecers to target motor vehicles, our dependence on oil and public transit.

Currently, with regard to public transportation in the immediate region of Montreal, there are feasibility studies on three major projects. First, on the North Shore, there is a rapid commuter train that links Montreal to the region of Terrebonne-Repentigny-Mascouche and which is at a little more advanced stage than the two others. Indeed, the government has already committed \$300 million to solve this problem.

Quebeckers are asking for \$328 million, and we see already that the money will almost certainly be totally spent on the Montreal-Mascouche commuter train.

• (1350)

Our minister and senator recently came to us with a new project to link downtown Montreal and the Montreal-Trudeau airport, in Dorval. The minister and senator probably has in his pockets some interesting amounts for public transportation.

In my area, the riding of Brossard—La Prairie also has its pre-feasibility studies. Our Minister of Transport could probably tell us more about this project. There is a plan for light rail on the boom of Champlain bridge. The pre-feasibility studies are completed. We are waiting for the results. All the chambers of commerce on the South Shore are anxious to see these results.

A few months ago, the cost of this project was estimated at \$1.2 billion. Once again, we see that it would be very easy for the Quebec government to invest in public transportation. There are three projects that would easily reach \$1 billion, I would even say \$2 billion, if we include all the infrastructures and all the structures to cross the St. Lawrence River. Public transportation is very important in Quebec.

Quebec is trying to free itself from its oil dependency. Here are a few numbers randomly chosen. In 1962, 67% of energy needs were filled with fossil fuels. With the big hydroelectric projects, that percentage was reduced to the point where, in 1981, our oil dependency had dropped to 53%.

In 2002, that percentage fell to 38% thanks to the increase in hydroelectricity production in Quebec. The reduction of our dependency on oil is mainly attributable to the implementation of programs like EnerGuide and the shift towards electric heating.

In 2005, Quebec consumed 200 million barrels of oil a year. We want to reduce that consumption by at least 20% by 2016. So, it is very important that the \$328 million we are demanding from the federal government be directed toward public transit. The government must act swiftly and make public the studies the Agence métropolitaine du transport spent \$12 million on.

There is a project that is of particular interest to me and that has become a priority for the population of Montreal's South Shore. It concerns highway 10, which has reached its full capacity. Every day, the population must cope with traffic congestion on the Champlain bridge. A light train could transport 20,000 people an hour and reduce the number of cars using the bridge by about 8,000.

In fact, the addition of a train would bring enormous savings for the area. Furthermore, the time lost by workers is estimated at \$1 billion every year.

I urge our Minister of Transport to invest in public transit as soon as possible and not 10 years from now, after two or three further elections.

• (1355)

Mr. Luc Harvey (Louis-Hébert, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to put a question to the hon. member. He is talking about a light train to replace 8,000 vehicles on the road. The average vehicle produces four tonnes of CO₂ annually. Since we are talking about 8,000 vehicles, this means a reduction of 32,000 tonnes of CO₂ in the environment. The objectives set are in megatonnes, that is in millions of tonnes. Therefore, these 32,000 tonnes of CO₂ represent only 0.3% of these objectives. I wonder if the hon. member could tell us what he will do about the other 99.7%.

Mr. Marcel Lussier: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member mentioned a lot of figures. Unfortunately, since I do not have these numbers in front of me, I will be very cautious in commenting on them. The figures that I mentioned are from studies by chambers of commerce on the south shore, which are very active on this issue. It goes without saying that a project on the south shore will not solve the whole issue of greenhouse gas emissions across the province. In our opinion, public transit and then automobiles are very important factors in the reduction of these greenhouse gas emissions. The number of automobiles must go down, while the number of hybrid and electrical vehicles must increase. The figure of four tonnes per vehicle may be based on old technologies, and vehicles of the future will consume less fuel.

Ms. Monique Guay (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my colleague must know that we now have a new commuter train in Saint-Jérôme. This is the result of long-term efforts, but we finally succeeded, thanks to the AMT and the Quebec government. We are proud to have this new means of transport, which is already extremely popular. We even have shuttles carrying passengers from municipalities around Saint-Jérôme to ride the train to Montreal. Of course, this is a minor step, if we consider our extensive territory. Does my colleague think we should go on investing in research on an electrical car? In Saint-Jérôme, the CEVEQ is doing some research on an electrical vehicle. Would the hon. member care to comment?

Mr. Marcel Lussier: Mr. Speaker, it is unfortunate that we invest so little in the development of new technologies for an electrical car. These technologies need to be refined. The weather we have in

Quebec creates a few problems, such as a shorter life span for batteries. Scientists are aware of these problems and are looking for solutions.

We should also understand that there is a link between commuter trains and cars. We need incentive parking lots for the cars that carry passengers between the train station and their homes. These parking lots are an integral part of the public transit long-term solution.

We could also consider incentives for carpooling. Five people who live in the same area could share a car to go to the incentive parking lot and take the train. We should encourage carpooling, incentive parking lots, and public transit.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

• (1400)

[English]

JUNIOR CURLING CHAMPIONSHIP

Mr. Rick Dykstra (St. Catharines, CPC): Mr. Speaker, you may be wondering why I am wearing this sweater but let me explain.

It is a big week for all curling players and fans here in Canada. The National Junior Curling championships are underway in the curling capital of the world, the great city of St. Catharines.

For the second time in six years, the city has been called upon to host 13 male and 13 female junior teams from 10 provinces and 2 of our territories. Including their families and friends, over 600 people are visiting the garden city.

We delivered in 2001 and the curling folks in St. Catharines are delivering in spades in 2007. The young men and women from across our great country are playing their hearts out and showing the world their skills as athletes and, most important, their abilities as young leaders in our country.

These young people are shining examples of the future of our country and, I am proud to say, they are in St. Catharines this week. I would like to invite all Canadians to tune into this weekend's finals. On Saturday the junior men compete and on Sunday afternoon the junior women go all out for our country's championship.

St. Catharines is the place in Canada to be this weekend.

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KAMIL SADIQ

Mr. Lui Temelkovski (Oak Ridges—Markham, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last Wednesday, the Regional Municipality of York Police Services posthumously granted Kamil Sadiq its award for civic leadership.

Statements by Members

Mr. Sadiq was a visionary, humanitarian and resident of Markham for many years and recently lost his battle with cancer. Mr. Sadiq was committed to creating an inclusive, equitable and peaceful society and his community involvement spoke to these goals.

He initiated two alliances to foster understanding and to seek non-violent ways to resolve conflicts: the Canadian Federation of Intercultural Friendship and a new partnership between the federation, police agencies and municipal governments known as the Canadian Federation of Intercultural Friendship Community and Police Committee. Just last year, he marked 50 years as a Freemason.

Mr. Sadiq's legacy serves as an example to all of us and I am pleased to honour him in the House today.

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[Translation]

MAURICE HUARD

Ms. Monique Guay (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, shortly before the House resumed, one of our colleagues passed away following a brief illness.

Moe, as he was known to most of us, fulfilled his Assistant Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms duties with pride and was blessed with a sense of humour that we will all miss.

For 21 years, he was a nurse with the Canadian Armed Forces before joining the House of Commons family in 1993.

Sadly, it is when members of this family leave us that we recognize how tightly knit we are, all allegiances and partisanship aside. We work together every day in this place and the loss of one of our own reminds us that we must respect one another.

The Bloc Québécois extends its condolences to the family, friends and colleagues of Assistant Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms Maurice Huard.

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[English]

MULTIPLY FOREST PRODUCTS MILL

Mr. Tony Martin (Sault Ste. Marie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, one of northwestern Ontario's few good news stories burned to the ground this week in a devastating fire at the Multiply Forest Products Mill in Nipigon.

This community northeast of Thunder Bay is in shock. One hundred and fifty people worked at the mill, the number one employer in a small town of 1,800.

While, thank God, no one was injured, the fire is a human and economic catastrophe. With so little good news in the forestry sector, this mill was successful. It was locally owned, built on residents' investments, labour, management collaboration and new technology.

New Democrats share Nipigon's grief. New Democrats will do our part to help get relief and rebuild. Nipigon can rise from the ashes. Mayor Harvey, council, mill owners, employees and volunteers will do their part but we must help too, and quickly.

I have spoken with the FedNor minister and he tells me to tell the people of Nipigon to get their requests to him. Saturday I will visit and see what more we can do.

* * *

● (1405)

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT WEEK

Mr. Ted Menzies (Macleod, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as part of International Development Week, many events are being held across the country to highlight the involvement of Canadians in international development.

Afghanistan is the largest recipient of Canadian aid and it is fitting that representatives from the Microfinance Investment Facility for Afghanistan are here today to report on the impressive results. MISFA is one of the most successful programs that Canadians can be proud of supporting in Afghanistan. Over 300,000 people are benefiting from loans and savings services and 10,000 more are being reached every month.

Canada's new government has taken a leading role in providing Afghans, especially women, with opportunities for greater financial autonomy, access to goods and services and, above all, a better way of life.

This week's funding announcement for MISFA, which boosted Canada's contribution to this important program by 40%, up to \$56 million, is another example of our government getting things done and obtaining real results, not only for Afghans but also for Canadians who want to know that their tax dollars are being spent well on proven initiatives in Afghanistan.

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DAVID BIGGAR

Hon. Joe McGuire (Egmont, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Prince Edward Island lost one of its foremost advocates for conservation and for the environment when we lost David Biggar of Portage, P.E.I. recently.

David did not only talk about the conservation and rehabilitation of Prince Edward Island's watersheds, he actively worked to reclaim our waterways. He epitomized the adage of "act locally for global impact".

For many, many years, David would have a federal project proposal to do work on his favourite river, the Trout River in Coleman, P.E.I., or the Mill River and other streams that needed reclamation, improvement or to be stocked with fish.

He never accepted a denial of his proposals. He always hired individuals who needed work and he always fulfilled the objectives of his proposals.

He raised money for the O'Leary Wildlife Federation almost single-handedly and relentlessly drove the agenda of the Federation of Western Prince Edward Island.

David was a vocal, hard-working member of his community. He will be missed. I extend my sympathy to his wife Mary, his mother Mary Ellen and his family.

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CANADIAN FORCES

Mr. Dave Batters (Palliser, CPC): Mr. Speaker, one year ago, Palliser residents voted for a government that would get things done for Canadians.

As the home to 15-Wing, the people of Moose Jaw know that they now have a federal government that will support our armed forces and ensure that the men and women of our military have the equipment they need to get the job done.

Since being elected last year, our government has made a major commitment to strengthening the Canadian armed forces.

Our \$17.1 billion “Canada First” procurements to date include: \$5 billion for strategic and tactical aircraft; \$2 billion for medium to heavy-lift helicopters; \$1.1 billion for medium sized logistics trucks; and, \$2.1 billion for three supply ships.

Our commitment to protect Canadians, defend our sovereignty and strengthen our role in the world is good news for Canadians and for Palliser.

Our Conservative government is committed to Canada's Snow-birds and to funding the NATO flight training in Canada program until 2021.

With our new military investments, we will continue to deliver real results for Canadians.

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[Translation]

RICHARD COUTURE

Mrs. Carole Lavallée (Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in 2001, Richard Couture's two sons, who were barely 20 years old, died in a terrible car accident when one of them fell asleep at the wheel.

Since then, the Saint-Hubert resident has campaigned to make our roads safer. Thanks to him, rumble strips have been installed along several highways in Montérégie and guardrail design has been improved.

This business leader has worked closely with the Quebec ministry of transport and the Société de l'assurance automobile du Québec to implement these measures all over Quebec, which is no small task. Nevertheless, his remarkable determination and hard work are making a big difference and have elicited the respect and admiration of all. He has even been awarded the medal of the National Assembly.

This is road safety year in Quebec, so I would like to highlight Richard Couture's courage, devotion and determination to make Quebec's roads safer and save lives.

Statements by Members

[English]

NATIONAL BLIND CURLING CHAMPIONSHIP

Mr. Ron Cannan (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise today to recognize Dean Martell, Sandy Neddow, Frank Costello, Bob and Barbara Comba and Janet Dyck who are in Ottawa for the National Blind Championship bonspiel.

These individuals have represented Kelowna, British Columbia and Canada with distinction and class.

They have won the national bonspiel the past two years and are returning to defend their title once again. I am proud to call them my constituents and to celebrate their accomplishments.

This bonspiel, organized by the Canadian Council of the Blind, is one of the premier events of White Cane Week, a week dedicated to celebrating the equal talents and abilities of the blind and visually impaired community.

Events, such as this national bonspiel, demonstrate the self-sufficiency and determination of the blind and visually impaired and their commitment to maintaining an active lifestyle.

I would like to congratulate the Kelowna team on its past victories and on its 8-0 record at this year's championship bonspiel. We wish them the best of luck as they defend their title and go for a “three-peat”.

* * *

● (1410)

VOLUNTEERISM

Ms. Yasmin Ratansi (Don Valley East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, more than 12 million Canadians provide \$2 billion worth of voluntary work annually and approximately 45% of Canadians use their spare time to volunteer and serve the community.

However, in the draconian cuts announced by the so-called new government of Canada last September, the Minister of Canadian Heritage and Status of Women announced that she was eliminating federal funding to the Canada Volunteerism Initiative. This makes no sense. The Conservatives inherited a \$13 billion surplus and yet they feel it necessary to eliminate this essential service.

What was the rationale for these cuts? Were they based on any form of evaluation? Did anyone bother to look at whether the goals of the program were being met before making this decision?

I understand that the minister, after four months, has still not met with Volunteer Canada to discuss these drastic cuts.

Why has the mean-spirited government targeted volunteers and why will the minister not make herself accountable to Canadians?

Statements by Members

[Translation]

STATUS OF WOMEN

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher (Beauport—Limoilou, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in recent months, there has been quite a bit of misinformation in the media about Status of Women Canada.

We have succeeded in making administrative savings of \$5 million at Status of Women Canada. This means \$5 million more for women, in addition to many other measures this government has taken for Canadian women and their families.

An independent assessment has revealed that when the Liberals were in power, it cost 31 cents to provide one dollar in funding for women. This is unacceptable both for women and for taxpayers in general.

We are investing in supporting women, not in creating more bureaucracy.

I am happy to announce that the first grant under the new conditions, worth \$49,140, has been awarded to an agency that will provide sex trade workers with tools to help them quit the industry.

On this side of the House, we are all working for the well-being of Canadian women.

* * *

[English]

SLAVE TRADE

Hon. Bill Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, last night, thanks to the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, members of Parliament were given an opportunity to preview the movie *Amazing Grace*, which tells the story of British MP William Wilberforce's long fight to abolish slavery. This superb movie was produced to coincide with the 200th anniversary of the abolition of the slave trade in the British Empire.

At a time when human slavery is making a comeback illicitly, in a way that calls for concerted international action, it is important to remember that before 1807 slavery was a legal and an integral part of the imperial economy. Wilberforce had to contend with arguments that the abolition of slavery would make Britain less competitive, that it would advantage Britain's enemies, that it would eliminate jobs and that government revenues would be affected.

Wilberforce contended not only with the sugar barons and profiteers, but against an embedded economic system that contradicted God's will for human equality. He insisted that the moral thing to do was the best thing to do and that the example would catch on as ultimately it did. Surely we would do well to heed this insight when dealing with the issues of our own time.

* * *

[Translation]

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Ms. Raymonde Folco (Laval—Les Îles, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, 40 years after the Laurendeau-Dunton report, a CROP poll has found that 81% of Canadians want Canada to remain a bilingual country. Yet there is very little access to provincial services in the minority language.

Under the Dion action plan, the Liberal government earmarked \$786.3 million over five years for official languages. The Liberal opposition is asking the Conservative government to maintain that Liberal commitment and take action to correct the huge disparities faced by linguistic minorities in Canada.

Canada cannot be a bilingual country on paper only. Canadians are clearly highly motivated to learn the other official language.

I invite the federal, provincial and territorial governments to work together to find ways of expanding second language instruction from early childhood on.

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● (1415)

SUICIDE PREVENTION WEEK

Mr. Jean-Yves Laforest (Saint-Maurice—Champlain, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in every region of Quebec, there are hundreds of individuals who are working tirelessly day after day to ensure that suicide is no longer the primary cause of death among men between the ages of 20 and 40.

As this is Suicide Prevention Week, I want to stress the significance of this cause of death, and particularly what we should all do to prevent such deaths.

The hon. Michael Sheehan, a Quebec court judge, himself deeply afflicted by the loss of a son, recently gave a conference that left no one indifferent. In the past ten years, 12,000 Quebecers have taken their own lives; this happens to be the exact number of people living in La Tuque, where we attended this conference.

It is important that all the citizens of Quebec realize that there are effective ways of fighting this terrible affliction. Suicide prevention centres are in great need of support, which we should really provide them. It is a matter of life.

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[English]

HERITAGE DAY

Hon. Bryon Wilfert (Richmond Hill, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on February 18, St. Mary's Anglican Church, built in 1872, the same year Richmond Hill was incorporated, is being honoured during Heritage Day in a celebration of historic places across Canada.

The Hon. Jean Chrétien, the minister responsible at the time of the foundation's creation, said:

Maturity may be recognized in a nation when its people take thought for their past: take thought... in the dynamic sense of knowing the past as a key to understanding the present and future.

Heritage Day is an important opportunity to celebrate the architectural heritage and historic places of Canada. The Heritage Canada Foundation promotes the third Monday in February each year as Heritage Day.

A Victorian tea will be held at St. Mary's Anglican Church and the archives committee will put on a display of historic artifacts. This will include a presentation and historic photographs of area churches from the Richmond Hill Public Library's unique collection. Church architecture in the region from 1850 to 1900 will be the topic of conversation.

It is hoped that the residents of Richmond Hill will join in celebrating national Heritage Day in the beautiful and historic chapel.

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ALBERTA OIL SANDS

Ms. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary—Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, a Liberal rookie has slipped up and given Canadians a glimpse of the Liberals' secret agenda.

The member for Ajax—Pickering made a direct attack on a success story of our nation's economy that just so happens to be located in a region the Liberals have written off for the next election.

The member let it out of the bag that a future Liberal government would be ordering oil energy companies to simply stop it, that they could put their plans on hold because if it cost too much energy to get it out of the ground, to get it out of the oil sands, then so be it. In fact the member said that if the energy companies did not cooperate, there would be consequences.

Bullying, threats, pitting one region against the other in a shallow trade-off for votes is the Liberal way.

However, Canadians know that the strength of one is the strength of all and the whole is important. Our government wants all sectors of Canada's economy to grow and prosper for the benefit of all Canadians.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[Translation]

MIDDLE EAST

Hon. Stéphane Dion (Leader of the Opposition, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are still waiting for the report that the hon. member for Mississauga—Streetsville and special advisor to the Prime Minister on Middle Eastern affairs had promised to make public. I have a very simple question for the Prime Minister and, for once, I would like him to be upfront.

Did he receive a written report from the hon. member for Mississauga—Streetsville on his trip to the Middle East, yes or no?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have already said that I received the report from the hon. member for Mississauga—Streetsville after his trip abroad a number of months ago. I am honoured that the hon. member for Mississauga—Streetsville was prepared to serve not just this country, but also the new Government of Canada.

[English]

Hon. Stéphane Dion (Leader of the Opposition, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I asked the Prime Minister if the report was a written one.

Oral Questions

He did not answer that. He needs to clarify if it is a written report, and if it is not, he needs to make public the notes made by the foreign affairs officials who were travelling with the member about where they went and what they did.

Will he release the written report? Where are the notes that the foreign affairs officials wrote while travelling on taxpayers' money?

• (1420)

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Mississauga—Streetsville was asked to go on a trip and to prepare a report for me. He did prepare a written report; I have had it for some time. This is advice I asked him to give the Prime Minister. He has given that advice to the Prime Minister. I intend to keep it in confidence as I would with any member. He will go on future trips and we will follow a similar procedure.

Hon. Stéphane Dion (Leader of the Opposition, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, a commitment was made by the member for Mississauga—Streetsville to release the report. The Prime Minister is keeping the report. He is not willing to release either the report or the notes made by the foreign affairs officials. I guess there is something there that the Prime Minister does not want to release to the Canadian people. We need to know what it is.

Will the Prime Minister now ask the Auditor General for a value for money audit on these trips?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member of the Liberal Party knows full well that special advisers to the Prime Minister do not release their reports publicly. They have not in the past and they will not in the future.

What we all understand is that the hon. member for Mississauga—Streetsville decided that he could better serve his country by working with Canada's new government. I say respectfully to the leader of the Liberal Party that if he was interested in the opinions of the hon. member for Mississauga—Streetsville, he had three years to ask him those opinions and never did so.

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AFGHANISTAN

Mr. Michael Ignatieff (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, any government that depends on that member's advice on foreign affairs is in deep trouble.

The Prime Minister's own Privy Council Office has warned him confidentially that the Afghanistan mission will fail unless there is an immediate shift in development strategy. A European assessment of our aid effort in Kandahar said, "The impact of CIDA in Kandahar province is so minimal as to be non-existent".

Will the Minister of International Cooperation tell the House how she proposes to get the aid situation in Kandahar under control and lead this mission—

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of International Cooperation.

[Translation]

Hon. Josée Verner (Minister of International Cooperation and Minister for la Francophonie and Official Languages, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to hear this question.

Oral Questions

In my opinion, the hon. member should have asked such a question when the Liberal government allocated just \$250 million for rebuilding Afghanistan—a situation that we corrected by increasing the Afghanistan reconstruction and development budget to maintain it at \$100 million annually.

He also could have attended, at noon today, the two speeches delivered by the director of the microcredit program in Afghanistan, who was here to reveal the results obtained in Afghanistan thanks to investments—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Etobicoke—Lakeshore.

Mr. Michael Ignatieff (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have another question for the Minister of International Cooperation. What accountability measures does she intend to put in place to ensure that Canadian aid for development produces concrete results?

When will she report to Parliament on the results of our reconstruction efforts?

I ask her not to refer me to her department's website because that would be an insult to this House and to the intelligence of Canadians.

Hon. Josée Verner (Minister of International Cooperation and Minister for la Francophonie and Official Languages, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the CIDA website is not an insult to Canadians. It allows Canadians to become aware of the real results being produced in Afghanistan.

On this side of the House we have taken effective measures in order to ensure we are working in all transparency. We are working together with internationally known organizations such as the World Bank, UNICEF and other partners in Afghanistan. I invite the hon. member to also question these organizations that ensure that our funds are well spent in Afghanistan.

The fact remains that on the other side of the House, accountability is a concept that escapes them. The only way—

• (1425)

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

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THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, a meeting between the environment, natural resources and Indian affairs ministers, and the oil and gas industry is scheduled for tomorrow to discuss issues relating to global warming and the Kyoto protocol.

Will the Prime Minister ask his ministers to take advantage of this meeting to explain to the oil industry that its increasing profits are the result of its increasing pollution, and that the government will therefore be putting an end to the tax advantages in its favour?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the leader of the Bloc is aware that the government has already terminated the energy trusts. As we have said on several occasions, we intend to regulate all Canadian industries in order to ensure the regulation and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. We will continue to pursue the principle of polluter-pay.

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in his speech to the Canadian Club a few days ago, the Prime Minister said that all the money he saved by paying off the debt would be devoted to reducing personal income taxes.

Following that logic, will the Prime Minister commit to further cuts to oil industry tax benefits, that is the equivalent of \$3 billion since 2005, and to take that money and focus it essentially on climate change?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I say again, this government has not given any new subsidies to the oil and gas industry. The accusation by the Leader of the Opposition is absolutely wrong. This government has reduced taxes and personal income tax, including a 1% cut in the GST and a tax credit for users of public transit, and this, I must stress, had the support of the Bloc Québécois.

Mr. Bernard Bigras (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, when the Minister of the Environment appeared in committee this morning, he maintained that Quebec is asking for too much and that it could not ask for both a territorial approach to reducing greenhouse gases and, at the same time, a carbon exchange in Montreal.

Can the minister tell us what is contradictory about Quebec's two requests, when that is exactly what is being done in Europe?

Hon. John Baird (Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I never said that. I said it is absolutely extraordinary that the Bloc member is asking for a territorial approach on one hand, and a national exchange, which would be for Albertans, Nova Scotians and Quebeckers.

What is going to happen is that this government will work very hard with all the provincial governments throughout Canada to reduce greenhouse gases. This is a new approach, since we have never seen a national government truly take action to combat this serious problem.

Mr. Bernard Bigras (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, does the minister realize that, by advocating the intensity rule instead of an approach based on absolute reduction targets, he is compromising the creation of a carbon exchange?

Indeed, without specific targets, the very notion of a carbon exchange is compromised, and that is what is needed for it to work here in Canada.

Hon. John Baird (Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what this country needs is a government that will take a real leadership role in this file. We are the first national government prepared to bring in regulations to reduce greenhouse gases and improve air quality. We are prepared to act and I hope we will have the support of the Bloc Québécois.

Oral Questions

[English]

AUTOMOBILE INDUSTRY

Hon. Jack Layton (Toronto—Danforth, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today's news that Chrysler is going to eliminate 2,000 jobs in Canada makes it very clear that we have to get down to helping out our auto industry. Consumers want fuel efficient cars, but the government stands by and does absolutely nothing about it.

That is why the NDP put forward a green car strategy in 2003, supported by Greenpeace and the CAW. Too bad the Liberals would not adopt it because it would have transformed our industry and we would have been in the forefront of protecting jobs and creating new jobs as well.

Does the Prime Minister not understand that when it comes to building green cars, either we get it done or China, Japan and Korea will do it?

• (1430)

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, while we are obviously concerned by the announcements that we expect from Chrysler, this is a global company that is making global decisions. These are not related to policies in our country, as the member well knows. At the same time, we have seen a growth in other parts of the auto industry.

I appreciate some of the suggestions the leader of the NDP has made. They are much more positive than the motion tabled last week by the Leader of the Opposition, which would effectively propose that we cut emissions from the auto sector, from all sectors, by one-third in the next four and a half years. I wonder if he has any idea how that would devastate the Canadian auto sector.

Hon. Jack Layton (Toronto—Danforth, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is wrong about the impact of his own actions. The workers in the auto sector are worried and rightly so. Their jobs are on the line. As people look for more efficient cars, they will not find them manufactured here because there has been no action.

The government says that it is a global marketplace, that the market will take care of it, but the market is not fair. Those other countries can sell their cars in Canada without limit, but we cannot sell good Canadian cars, built right here, to countries like China, Korea and Japan.

Is that why the Prime Minister thinks it is a good idea to sign a free trade deal, signing away our auto industry to Korea?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government has been pursuing negotiations with South Korea and with others for the express purpose of opening up Asian markets to Canadian products. I am glad to see that Buzz Hargrove seems to have completely reversed himself and now suggests that is exactly what we should be doing, trying to open Asian markets. The government will work hard with the industry to do that.

The government has ongoing consultations with the energy sector. There are some happening this very day. We think it is important to consult with industry before telling it to simply slash one-third of its production, as the opposition would.

[Translation]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Hon. Marlene Jennings (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this government is making dangerous blunders in foreign affairs.

The Prime Minister provoked the People's Republic of China. Not surprisingly, today, the Chinese authorities are no longer cooperating with our diplomats. A Canadian citizen, Huseyin Celil, faces serious danger in China's justice system.

Does this government understand now why it cannot take such a cavalier attitude toward diplomacy?

[English]

Hon. Helena Guergis (Secretary of State (Foreign Affairs and International Trade) (Sport), CPC): Mr. Speaker, the situation with Mr. Celil is a great concern to our government. The hon. member knows that we have on many occasions expressed to the Chinese government that we would like it to recognize his Canadian citizenship.

In fact, when the Prime Minister directly raised this with the president of China, it was the Liberal Party that highly criticized him. Quite frankly, the hon. member and the Liberal Party should be ashamed and embarrassed at their hypocrisy.

[Translation]

Hon. Marlene Jennings (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's statements about the Chinese government and human rights have strained relations with that country.

Huseyin Celil's basic rights are further threatened because of the Prime Minister's belligerent attitude toward China.

Will the Prime Minister agree that he is behaving recklessly and that his approach is placing a Canadian citizen in serious danger?

[English]

Hon. Helena Guergis (Secretary of State (Foreign Affairs and International Trade) (Sport), CPC): Mr. Speaker, quite frankly, I cannot honestly believe that question has come from that hon. member's mouth.

Again, this situation is of great importance to our government. We have had on several occasions not only the Prime Minister raising this directly with the president of China, but no less than five of our top ministers also raising it with their counterparts.

With respect to some allegations that we heard about the torture of Mr. Celil, we know China is a signatory to the UN convention against torture and we expect it will live up to its UN obligations.

Hon. Dan McTeague (Pickering—Scarborough East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister was so outraged over no Canadian presence at Celil's trial that he ordered our diplomats to find the courthouse and take a seat. Telling diplomats to attend a trial that they have no idea where or when it is being held is not the way to go about foreign affairs.

Oral Questions

The Prime Minister has failed to honour his personal commitment to Mr. Celil.

Why will he not take the time to pick up the phone and speak to the Chinese president, register his concerns about the treatment of Mr. Celil and demand that our officials be told of the trial proceedings now?

● (1435)

Hon. Helena Guergis (Secretary of State (Foreign Affairs and International Trade) (Sport), CPC): Mr. Speaker, I do not think I need to point out the hypocrisy, again, where that member is concerned. We have on many times expressed and asked that the Chinese officials recognize the Canadian citizenship of Mr. Celil. We have, in fact, directed officials there to head to the site, to remain on site, to gain contact with Mr. Celil in order to give him the consular services he is entitled as a Canadian citizen.

Hon. Dan McTeague (Pickering—Scarborough East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me give that member, who has just started this file, a little insight as to why the Prime Minister refuses to stand up for Mr. Celil.

We know he can admit now that his ability to stand up for Mr. Celil was so severely limited when he accused China of spying and turned a recent meeting with the Chinese president into an international farce.

How is it possible for the Prime Minister, or that minister, to stand up for Mr. Celil when the Chinese view him as something of a bumbling cold warrior who views Canada's second largest trading partner with such blatant suspicion and contempt?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government, at all levels, has been clear. We view Mr. Celil as a Canadian citizen. At all opportunities, we have taken the time to raise his case, to express our concerns, to demand justice be done. Every time that member and the Liberal Party have said that we should say nothing, we should do nothing, we should take no action, just like they did with Mr. Arar and every Canadian citizen they forgot about when they were in office.

* * *

[Translation]

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Mr. Richard Nadeau (Gatineau, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we have learned that the Canadian army has just done an about-face and will no longer require its top brass to be bilingual. It seems that for a certain number of its anglophone senior staff, mastering a minimum of French is an impossible mission.

How can the Minister for la Francophonie and Official Languages stand quietly by while the Canadian army steps back 40 years with regard to the use of the two official languages?

Hon. Josée Verner (Minister of International Cooperation and Minister for la Francophonie and Official Languages, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate our colleague for having put together a plan that shows our government's determination to promote both official languages. This strategy is based on results achieved by sound programs and policies that are more practical.

The transformation model provides a new plan that is clear, has specific objectives and has activities with measurable outcomes, while taking into account the operational requirements of the Canadian Forces.

Mr. Richard Nadeau (Gatineau, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the impact of the unwarranted closing of the only francophone military college in Saint-Jean is now being felt.

How can the francophones in this government calmly stand by while the army not only refuses to respect the spirit and the letter of the Official Languages Act but also perpetrates a serious injustice against francophone officers who are bilingual and could take on the responsibilities of those senior officers incapable of learning a bare minimum of French?

Hon. Josée Verner (Minister of International Cooperation and Minister for la Francophonie and Official Languages, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this plan complies with the Official Languages Act and also accommodates the unique structure of the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Forces.

Had the Bloc member truly wished to help francophones, particularly francophones outside Quebec, he would have enlisted support for Bill S-3.

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AFGHANISTAN

Ms. Caroline St-Hilaire (Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the balance between the Canadian contingent's military and humanitarian activities in Afghanistan is not as perfect as the Minister of International Cooperation would have us believe. Again this morning, the media confirmed that unless the government restores the balance, the international effort could fail.

Does the government plan to make more of an effort to reconfigure the mission in Afghanistan?

● (1440)

Hon. Josée Verner (Minister of International Cooperation and Minister for la Francophonie and Official Languages, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to know where the Bloc Québécois member was when the previous government allocated just \$60 million per year for Afghanistan.

We increased that budget to \$100 million. The Liberals spent a mere \$5 million in the province of Kandahar. We have already spent over \$16 million there and by the end of the year, we will have spent \$20 million or more.

Ms. Caroline St-Hilaire (Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of International Cooperation thinks it is unfair to compare the funds allocated to each aspect of the mission. I would like to remind the minister that in Bosnia, the government spent \$325 per person on humanitarian relief, but in Afghanistan, it is spending less than \$50 per person.

In light of that huge gap, does the minister realize that the people of Afghanistan urgently need a better balance?

*Oral Questions***DARFUR**

Hon. Josée Verner (Minister of International Cooperation and Minister for la Francophonie and Official Languages, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind the member that that was the first thing we did this year. We pledged up to \$100 million per year until 2011 to bring a better balance to this mission that, under the former government, was facing declining funding. That government was hoping to get better results by reducing the amount of money allocated to development.

Where was the member then?

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[English]

MEXICO

Mr. Ken Boshcoff (Thunder Bay—Rainy River, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last month a teenager from Woodbridge was killed while vacationing in Mexico. Two weeks later another hit and run killed a Chatham man. Just last Saturday a gunman opened fire and shot two more Canadians in Acapulco. All this has happened less than a year after the brutal murders of Dominic and Nancy Ianiero in Cancun.

Could the Minister of Foreign Affairs please tell the House what needs to happen before his department will finally issue a travel warning for Canadians visiting Mexico?

Hon. Helena Guergis (Secretary of State (Foreign Affairs and International Trade) (Sport), CPC): Mr. Speaker, the ongoing investigations in Mexico are of great concern to our government. Our condolences go out to all the families and friends of the victims who have experienced this violence.

We have travel reports that are put on line by the Department of Foreign Affairs to reflect up to date safety and security conditions, urging Canadians to always take precaution when they travel abroad. Even though we may prepare ourselves, there are those circumstances where nothing we do can prevent those crimes.

We have consular services for Canadians abroad that are available 24/7.

Mr. Ken Boshcoff (Thunder Bay—Rainy River, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government needs to take its head out of the sand on this file. Canadians deserve to be notified that their safety could be in jeopardy while travelling in Mexico.

The foreign affairs minister has finally met with his Mexican counterpart. Could the Prime Minister tell the House what concrete assurances were received that Canadians would be protected while in Mexico, or could he tell the House that the minister has instructed his department to prepare an official travel warning?

Hon. Helena Guergis (Secretary of State (Foreign Affairs and International Trade) (Sport), CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Foreign Affairs was in Mexico yesterday and is there today. He is raising the issue again with his counterpart, urging that there be very thorough, timely and transparent investigations for all these cases.

Again, I remind the member that there has always been a travel report in which it advises Canadians that there have been some random shootings and that they should exercise extra caution when travelling to Mexico.

Mr. Glen Pearson (London North Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I urge the Conservative government to make a specific contribution to an emerging humanitarian catastrophe developing in south Sudan.

Fifty thousand Darfur refugees have converged in the region in recent weeks, with many more expected in the coming months. The International Organization for Migration and the United Nations are on the scene, but desperately need the help of the international community.

If the government committed just \$6 million, it would mean the difference of between life and death for thousands of families. Will the government answer this plea and alleviate what is already a desperate situation?

[Translation]

Hon. Josée Verner (Minister of International Cooperation and Minister for la Francophonie and Official Languages, CPC): Mr. Speaker, so far, the government has provided \$35 million in humanitarian assistance to Darfur. This is indeed a very troubling situation, which we are monitoring very closely. However, we also have to make sure that relief workers are able to work in the safest conditions possible.

[English]

Mr. Glen Pearson (London North Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I just returned from the region and I can tell the House that time is of the essence. The region cannot handle the influx of these refugees from Darfur. The International Organization for Migration and the United Nations are prepared to do the heavy lifting. They only require the funds and the political will of this House. All Canadians want this solved.

Will the Prime Minister do it, and will he do it today?

● (1445)

[Translation]

Hon. Josée Verner (Minister of International Cooperation and Minister for la Francophonie and Official Languages, CPC): The hon. member is right, Mr. Speaker. Canadians are extremely concerned about the situation in Darfur. We are closely monitoring the situation. It is important to us to ensure that relief workers can work in a safe setting.

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NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. Mike Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government believes that a dynamic forest industry contributes to a healthy Canadian economy.

[English]

That is why we provided \$400 million in budget 2006 to ensure a more stable future for the forest industry. Earlier today, the Minister of Natural Resources announced the forest industry long term competitiveness initiative.

Could the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources update the House on how the government is creating the environment necessary for Canada's industry to compete on a global scale?

Oral Questions

[Translation]

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we want a forest industry that is strong, competitive and dynamic. Today we announced funding of \$127.5 million so that those who depend on the forest industry can look to the future with confidence.

This initiative will help promote innovation, expand markets and combat pests, and will help address skills and adjustment issues, which are of concern to the industry.

The Liberals have never done anything. The Bloc will never be able to do anything. Our government is taking action.

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OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP): Mr. Speaker, after years of failing to comply with the Official Languages Act, national defence, the CBC tells us, has given up and will do only the bare minimum to establish bilingualism. Away with the regulations. Our military leaders will no longer speak French. National defence is giving itself until 2012 to fine tune its new bare minimum plan—over forty years after passage of the Official Languages Act. Bilingual former senior officers are criticizing these changes.

How does the minister explain such an affront to our francophone military personnel?

Hon. Josée Verner (Minister of International Cooperation and Minister for la Francophonie and Official Languages, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will repeat for the member what I said earlier. The plan is centred on results broadly promoted by policies and programs that are sound and more practical.

The plan is new and clear with specific objectives and activities whose effectiveness is measurable. I add that the plan was developed in cooperation with the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages.

Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this answer is an insult to francophones.

The current situation is staggering at national defence: 89% of francophones are bilingual, as compared with only 11% of anglophones.

In specific terms, francophones are told there will be only a few bilingual units. They will have to get along in English. The anglophones are told there is no problem and they can go wherever they like.

Will the Minister of National Defence bring matters into line in his department and establish a bilingualism policy worthy of the men and women who are prepared to put their lives on the line for Canada?

Hon. Josée Verner (Minister of International Cooperation and Minister for la Francophonie and Official Languages, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the new model will enable military and civilian personnel of the Department of National Defence to be directed, trained, managed and supported in the official language of their choice, under the provisions of the Official Languages Act. Our government

is firmly committed to defending the country's two official languages.

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[English]

AUTOMOBILE INDUSTRY

Hon. Scott Brison (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with massive layoffs pending at Chrysler, why has the government cancelled labour market partnership agreements that could have helped many of the 2,000 Chrysler workers and why is this Prime Minister, the first in 40 years, refusing to meet with the head of the CAW?

Hon. Monte Solberg (Minister of Human Resources and Social Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member should know that the government announced its intentions to strengthen labour market initiatives in "Advantage Canada". We are in constant contact with our provincial partners on all of these issues.

We will certainly put in place all the measures necessary to ensure that we have the strongest possible economy, something that is already happening under the leadership of the Prime Minister.

● (1450)

Hon. Scott Brison (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have a minister who is laissez-faire and a Prime Minister who does not care.

The Liberal government partnered with the auto industry to create thousands of new jobs. Canada's neo-Conservative government has done almost nothing and we are losing thousands of auto workers jobs.

Will the Prime Minister meet with the head of the CAW, take action, and reintroduce the previous government's auto strategy that was working and creating jobs here in Canada?

[Translation]

Hon. Maxime Bernier (Minister of Industry, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would remind my hon. colleague that we tabled the Advantage Canada plan, a plan that will enable the automobile industry and all other industries to enjoy competitive tax conditions.

We will continue to lower taxes, to limit paperwork and regulations interfering with the productivity of Canadian business in the automobile sector, and we are proud of what we are doing.

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BROADCASTING AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Hon. Lucienne Robillard (Westmount—Ville-Marie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Canadian Heritage and Status of Women does not seem to understand her responsibilities. On the one hand, she is passing the ball to the CRTC on the issue of non-compliance with Canadian Television Fund rules, yet on the other hand, she herself called a meeting with the two protesting companies.

In addition, she is forgetting that under section 7 of the Broadcasting Act, she can recommend that the Conservative cabinet issue a direction to the CRTC on regulatory policy. The minister can therefore act today.

Why does she not act?

Oral Questions

Hon. Bev Oda (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Status of Women, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member knows, the CRTC regulations require a contribution. I am certain that the CRTC will enforce the regulations.

We understand the seriousness of the situation. That is why the government has announced a grant of \$200 million over two years. In response, the production industry said that the announcement sends a clear message to the industry and all Canadians that the government feels that Canadian production—

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

Hon. Lucienne Robillard (Westmount—Ville-Marie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, you will admit that it is rather discouraging to listen to the Minister of Canadian Heritage and Status of Women. Do we or do we not have a Minister of Canadian Heritage and Status of Women in this Conservative government? For the past year, she has taken a laissez-faire approach. The situation is urgent, and she does not even seem to realize it.

Production contracts are awarded in February. If the CRTC does not act this week, is the minister prepared to direct the CRTC to enforce the rules?

Hon. Bev Oda (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Status of Women, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have an independent organization that is responsible for regulating and monitoring the broadcasting and production industries. The CRTC is aware of the regulations. I am certain that the CRTC will act on behalf of all Canadians and the government.

[*English*]

If I might add, I spent 30 years understanding the cycle of production and broadcasting.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Maka Kotto (Saint-Lambert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we are going to persist with these questions. The Minister of Canadian Heritage and Status of Women is washing her hands of the fate of television production as a result of the decision by Shaw and Vidéotron to suspend their contributions to the Canadian Television Fund. Worse still, she is now throwing the blame onto the CRTC.

How can the minister explain that one week she acts as a messenger for the offending companies, and the next week she says that the matter has nothing to do with her because it is strictly the responsibility of the CRTC?

•(1455)

Hon. Bev Oda (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Status of Women, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we recognize the responsibilities of the CRTC and we also understand the gravity of the situation.

I am certain that the CRTC will act on behalf of all Canadians and for the government. At the same time, we also intend to assume our responsibilities.

Mr. Maka Kotto (Saint-Lambert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, is the minister aware that she is sending a very bad signal to the cable distribution companies that contribute to the fund by agreeing to discuss future scenarios with the offending companies, which, in the end, undermines the Canadian Television Fund.

What is she waiting for to remind Shaw and Vidéotron of their responsibilities? They should pay first and discuss later. It is that simple.

[*English*]

Hon. Bev Oda (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Status of Women, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to ensure that we have the information. I have met with every sector. I have met with the distributors. I have met with the artists. I have met with the producers. I have met with the writers. I have met with the broadcasters and I have also met with the Canadian Television Fund. We all understand the gravity of the situation and I know that the commission will also take on its responsibility.

* * *

AEROSPACE INDUSTRY

Mr. Omar Alghabra (Mississauga—Erindale, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as a new Canadian this country offered me limitless opportunities and gave me immense pride. While I am qualified to be elected to the House by the people of Mississauga—Erindale, because of the deal the government signed to buy Boeing aircraft, I and countless other Canadians cannot work on the maintenance of these aircraft.

Why will the Prime Minister not defend Canadians like me against discriminatory U.S. laws like ITAR?

Hon. Helena Guergis (Secretary of State (Foreign Affairs and International Trade) (Sport), CPC): Mr. Speaker, at present there are no identifiable ITAR difficulties with respect to the C-17 procurement. We do, however, recognize and share the concerns of Canadian companies who have had difficulty with the ITAR policy. The Prime Minister and a number of our ministers have indicated our deep concern about this American policy.

* * *

HEALTH

Mr. Daryl Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Labour.

After 30 years of experience in the public sector, I can personally attest to the fact that secondhand smoke is a matter of concern for all Canadians, including federal employees who work in correctional services. This particular issue came to the forefront last week. I would like to know what the minister is doing to resolve this very important health and safety issue?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Jean-Pierre Blackburn (Minister of Labour and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the matter of health and safety at work is the responsibility of my department by virtue of part II of the Canada Labour Code. In addition, the question of secondhand smoke in correctional facilities is something that concerns us. I have already been asked to authorize proceedings against the Correctional Service of Canada in that regard.

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However, the good news is that proceedings will not be necessary, because the Correctional Service of Canada, the bargaining agent for correctional officers, and the labour program are going to work together to find a solution to this problem.

* * *

RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canadian organizations played a leadership role in drafting the new International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on December 13. Canada should have been the first country to ratify the convention.

But instead of ratifying this important convention, the government is dragging its heels. This is unbelievable.

Will the minister quit beating around the bush and act now to make Canada one of the first signatories to this historic document?
[English]

Hon. Monte Solberg (Minister of Human Resources and Social Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government is already acting on behalf of disabled Canadians. Bill C-36 is right now before the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities. That piece of legislation will make it easier for people to qualify for CPP disability benefits.

I have also been in touch with many people in the disabled community to understand these issues better. We are going to move and take action to ensure that disabled Canadians have every chance to succeed in this country.

• (1500)

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the minister did not answer the question. There is a pattern to the Conservatives. When they cut services, they act with irresponsible and reckless abandon. When it is something that will actually help people, it is denial, delay and dithering.

Half of the growing number of homeless in Canada's streets are Canadians with disabilities. So are nearly half of those who line up at food banks to simply survive. Canadians with disabilities are the poorest of citizens and yet the government delays and dithers. Will the government now start to do what it takes so that Canada is among the first to ratify this important UN covenant?

Hon. Monte Solberg (Minister of Human Resources and Social Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I do not know if the member heard me. I said that we are acting. We have moved forward with Bill C-36. It will reduce the number of years that people have to be in the workforce in order to ensure they get CPP disability. This will help at least 3,700 people in the next few years.

We are moving forward on other initiatives. This government is acting on behalf of disabled Canadians everywhere.

* * *

CANADA POST

Hon. Gurbax Malhi (Bramalea—Gore—Malton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the minister responsible for Canada Post has shown total

disregard toward Canada Post's recent decision to replace home delivery with community mailboxes in my riding.

These mailboxes have been moved to an area of extremely high traffic, which poses a serious safety threat to my constituents, hence I ask the minister, when will this issue be addressed and the safety of my constituents guaranteed by the minister?

Hon. Lawrence Cannon (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as a matter of fact, that question has been addressed. Not only has this House adopted a resolution to maintain rural mail delivery, but we have also acted by emitting a directive to Canada Post so that it maintains and continues it. Therefore, we will be able to take care of that issue. We are looking at it.

Incidentally, the chief executive officer of Canada Post will be going to committee to answer questions such as those raised by the hon. member.

* * *

SENATE TENURE LEGISLATION

Mr. Mike Lake (Edmonton—Mill Woods—Beaumont, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal leader is on record as supporting term limits for senators. Bill S-4, which is currently stalled in the Senate, would do exactly that. It would place an eight year term limit on senators.

Could the Minister for Democratic Reform tell this House the importance of Bill S-4 as part of this government's package on democratic reform?

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today is day 254 since the bill to limit Senate terms to eight years was introduced in the Senate.

On May 8, 2006, the current leader of the Liberal Party stated to the Canadian press that he supported term limits, if members can believe it, but last week the Leader of the Opposition in the Senate described the role of senators as follows:

You are appointed. You're not accountable.

That is the attitude of the Liberal Party. I am not surprised. It has been the attitude of the Liberal Party for some time.

We have a very different view. That is why we brought in accountability. I would challenge the leader of the Liberal Party to call his—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Brossard—La Prairie.

[Translation]

TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Marcel Lussier (Brossard—La Prairie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Montreal's Agence métropolitaine de transport commissioned feasibility studies for the construction of light rail transit linking the South Shore to Montreal via the Champlain bridge. Such studies have been available for some time now.

Why is the Minister of Transport refusing to release these studies?

Hon. Lawrence Cannon (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will look into my honourable colleague's allegations.

That said, I would add that the Agence métropolitaine de transport is under the jurisdiction of the Government of Quebec. I will ask my officials to find out where this file is at and how the Government of Quebec is involved.

* * *

[English]

PRESENCE IN GALLERY

The Speaker: I would like to draw to the attention of hon. members the presence in the gallery of the Honourable Petar Cobankovic, Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management for the Republic of Croatia.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: I would also like to draw to the attention of hon. members the presence in the gallery of the Senior Chaplains of NATO and other allied countries, here for the 18th International Military Chiefs of Chaplains Conference. I invite all hon. members to a reception in honour of our guests at 3:15 in room 216 north.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

* * *

• (1505)

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Wascana, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in the usual manner, I wonder if the leader of the government in the House could provide the House with a briefing on the work that he plans to call before the House for the rest of this week and through next week.

While he is doing that, I wonder if he could specifically indicate his view with respect to the request that has been made today by a number of members of the official opposition that the government provide some time in the form of a take note debate at some point next week when all members of the House might discuss the topic of the safety of Canadians travelling in Mexico.

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today we will be continuing the debate on the Bloc opposition motion.

Tomorrow we will begin debate on the statutory order concerning the Anti-terrorism Act. That is for the extension of its provisions.

Next week will be justice week, when the government will showcase part of its safer streets agenda, starting on Monday with

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the continuation of the debate on the Anti-terrorism Act if it is not completed on Friday.

On Tuesday we plan to begin debate on Bill C-35, which deals with bail reform, and on Wednesday we will resume debate on the second reading stage of the dangerous offenders legislation, Bill C-27.

Thursday, February 15 shall be an allotted day.

On Friday it is my intention to call the report stage of Bill C-10 on mandatory minimum penalties, on the assumption that the justice committee can have it to the House by that time.

For each day, we will have the following business scheduled as backup bills: Bill C-31, the voter integrity legislation; Bill C-44, relating to human rights; Bill C-11, on transport; and Bill C-33, the technical income tax act.

I will be working closely with my counterpart in the Senate with respect to progress on Bill S-4 or, as we keep hearing, the lack of progress.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, a strong, effective and responsible government must speak with one voice, whether it be in the Senate or the House of Commons. The fact that the Leader of the Opposition in the House of Commons and the Leader of the Opposition in the Senate cannot present the same position on Bill S-4 is further evidence that the Liberals are currently not fit to govern. I certainly would like the opportunity for this House to deal with that bill.

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[Translation]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

OPPOSITION MOTION—KYOTO PROTOCOL

The House resumed consideration of the motion, and of the amendment.

Mr. Paul Crête (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to rise today to speak to this opposition motion brought forward by the Bloc Québécois. In his opening remarks, the leader of the Bloc showed how important it is that our motion be debated and adopted by this House. The motion reads as follows:

That, having recognized the principle of complying with the Kyoto targets, it is the opinion of this House that the government should provide the Government of Quebec with the sum of \$328 million to enable it to implement its plan to meet the Kyoto Protocol targets.

This \$328 million represents the amount that the Government of Quebec needs, according to its calculations, to fully meet our Kyoto targets and be a model for the rest of the country in the pursuit of these targets that are so important to Quebec, to Canada and to the whole planet. But we have been facing terrible obstacles in this debate.

First there was the Liberal Party's attitude. The current leader of the Liberal Party, who was Minister of the Environment at the time, said this about the request for \$328 million:

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The \$328 million was conditional on an agreement with regard to the projects. As these funds were not a transfer, we had to agree on the nature of the projects. The problem with the Government of Quebec is that it did not have any project to propose to us. It wanted to receive a transfer and then develop its plan. I said that I could not do that.

This quote shows the position of the current leader of the Liberal Party. He believes that something that has not been approved by the federal government cannot be good. Even though Quebec demonstrated that it had a good plan, a real plan that would help it meet the targets, that plan was simply dismissed by the Liberal Party. We were expecting a different attitude from the Conservative government when it came to power. Unfortunately, particularly in this sector, we are facing objections that show a lack of understanding of environmental issues. I will repeat what the Prime Minister was saying in 2002. He may have changed his mind since. He should tell us if that is the case.

The Prime Minister described the Kyoto protocol as essentially a socialist scheme to suck money out of wealth-producing nations. Implementation of the treaty would do a great deal of harm to the oil and gas industry, which is vital to the economies of Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia. Workers and consumers everywhere in Canada will lose. There are no Canadian winners under the Kyoto accord.

I have become aware, particularly in the last two weeks, that the Conservative government was incapable of grasping the fact that development must now take into consideration the overall environmental costs of a project. The days are now gone when development could be assessed solely from the economic point of view. Now, when a project is assessed, we need to know what the environmental costs of it will be, and these must be included in the project.

When anyone claims to be developing the economy of Canada without taking these effects into account, serious harm is being done to the quality of Canada's environment, as well as the condition of the entire planet. We have recently seen statements such as this one by the Prime Minister being totally contradicted by international experts. Scientists have clearly and unequivocally stated that 90% of climate change was due to human activity—the actions of men and women—and that this problem absolutely needed to be solved as soon as possible.

There is indeed a great deal still to be done. In 2002, the current Minister of Natural Resources said:

—I will start off with a very bold statement, that Kyoto should not be ratified. It is based on uncertain science with new doubts coming to light almost daily.

That is no longer the case today. Clearly, climate change is the result of human activity. The scientists have spoken. He can no longer say such things and he must recognize that we are in a context where action must be taken, or we are headed straight for disaster. Quebec and Canada will be particularly affected because, according to experts in the field, global warming will occur more rapidly in Nordic regions.

The Minister of Natural Resources also said:

Some pie in the sky thinking that Kyoto is going to green the earth and save the environment...We support a strong economy and a sustainable environment, two things that Kyoto simply cannot deliver.

● (1510)

It is no longer possible to draw a distinction between a vigorous economy and a quality environment. They have to be taken together. The \$328 million we want the federal government to invest, that are owed to Quebec and will enable it to achieve its targets, will be used to improve public transit, which will also help the economy.

I am quite open about this because in my own riding, in La Pocatière, the Bombardier plant can produce subway cars. There are others in Quebec that can produce buses. These are all measures that would generate economic activity while at the same time helping to improve the environment and deal with climate change.

The other example, which is absolutely fabulous, is the question of an emissions exchange. In this regard, these are not statements from a few years ago that they still refuse to correct. The Minister of the Environment said only this morning that an emissions exchange could not be set up at the same time as Quebec's plan. So why did Quebec ask for both these things at the same time?

He is confusing a lot of things that are actually quite clear. It is easy to see why he said last week in Paris that he was totally surprised and amazed that the planet's scientists had demonstrated that human activity was responsible for climate change.

Here is a specific example in regard to an emissions exchange. A company in my region, in Rivière-du-Loup, was willing to make a significant investment because people had said we would have this. The standards had to be clear and specific for there to be an economic advantage to investing in this exchange.

By deciding not to institute these standards, the Conservative government disrupted this plan, although it is not the only one. There are many others. There are all the people who do not make a great show of being environmentalists but who want to do what is right for sustainable development and find themselves stymied by what the government did.

Our motion today is aimed simply at enabling Quebec to do what it would have done much more quickly over the last few years if it had been a sovereign state. Things would have been different if Quebec had not been forced to go and beg Ottawa for money because the reality is still that the federal government collects the taxes while the needs are in the provinces. This is apparent in the fiscal imbalance and the very clear expression of it in achieving Kyoto.

If Quebec had 100% of the taxes, its development plan would have been in place for a long time because it has a vested interest, in terms of the environment and the economy, but also generally speaking, in terms of sustainable development, in seeing that happen.

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We have been waiting for this \$328 million for two years and we still have not received it. Yet, this had been promised by the current government. It is dithering. We never know clearly where it will go. We had the positions of the current leader of the opposition who said, when he was the environment minister: "I will agree project by project". Then, we had the Conservative minister who simply did not want to sign. We saw her in Nairobi, Africa, when she almost insulted the Minister of Environment of Quebec, Mr. Claude Béchar, by leaving him in the hallway when he had an interesting project to propose and an interesting record. For its part, the federal government did not have any record, but it had the floor. It spoke for Quebec and Canada, saying that Kyoto was not necessary or that it would not respect the projected targets.

Today, we have a new minister, but we still have the same kind of dithering. This is why we brought this debate to this House. We will have the opportunity to see where everyone stands.

Will the Liberal Party of Canada, the Conservative Party and the NDP support this Bloc Québécois motion, which reads:

That, having recognized the principle of complying with the Kyoto targets, it is the opinion of this House that the government should provide the Government of Quebec with the sum of \$328 million to enable it to implement its plan to meet the Kyoto Protocol targets.

Once we have the results, we will see where everyone stands. Are we indeed concerned about rewarding people who are doing their job well, in terms of the environment? Will the need for a territorial approach be respected, so that everyone can meet their targets based on their particular energy and consumption profile?

In Quebec, we have made choices in this regard in the past, and today, we are entitled to reap the benefits. This is what I hope we will obtain.

• (1515)

Will the Conservative government agree to recognize that the \$328 million must be handed over? Has the Liberal Party of Canada changed its tune from the positions held by its current leader, who was then the environment minister and insisted on proof that each project was good?

I see that I am out of time. Nevertheless, I call on this House to pass this motion, so that justice is finally done for Quebeckers when it comes to the environment, and something is done for the rest of Canada and the planet at the same time. There would certainly be nothing wrong in Quebec being able to look forward to the same future as the rest of the planet in this regard.

Mr. Mario Laframboise (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to put the following question to my colleague, who is our industry critic.

The Canadian economy, which is based on oil and hydrocarbons, is costing Quebec a lot. Quebec is not an oil producer. Of course, in a hydrocarbon-based economy, the Canadian dollar fluctuates according to the strength or the price of oil. This has created major drawbacks for the province's economy, including job losses.

Can he tell us how many jobs have been lost in Quebec's manufacturing sector since oil has taken over the stock exchange and the Canadian dollar?

Mr. Paul Crête: Mr. Speaker, the economy can be sick, somewhat as people can sometimes be sick. There is an illness that could be called "Dutch disease". In an economy where natural resources are very important, if we do nothing but give them our full attention, the result is a negative impact on the rest of the economy.

As the Leader of the Bloc Québécois was saying in his speech this morning, it is very clear that the evolution of the value of the Canadian dollar has almost exactly tracked the increase in the price of oil. As a result, we have moved from a 65¢ dollar to 85¢ today, and the dollar was skirting 90¢ less than six months ago. This has forced our manufacturing industries to adjust very quickly, without being able to benefit in any way from an action plan of the federal government which agreed to making big profits off our natural resources, but found ways for the people who supported the economy and developed our manufacturing industry to continue to be competitive.

We have in hand a perfect tool for this. A unanimous report has been adopted by the Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology. There are 22 recommendations, some of which concern sustainable development. Others concern businesses, to give them the option of accelerated depreciation. Others concern worker availability and intellectual property, to ensure that we escape this cycle whereby three months after people from emerging countries come here to visit us, they start producing at home what we were producing here. This has been raised by certain business owners. So there is a report in place. We hope that it is taken into account in the next budget. We shall see what comes of this.

However, the first thing we are demanding is that the federal government recognize that Quebec has practised development which takes into account the concepts of sustainable development, and that Quebec has to be supported in that direction. Quebec has a plan that is working, but it needs \$328 million from the federal government so that it can achieve its objectives.

We would like to get this money as soon as possible, while we are part of the federal system. Currently, this is the way to get it. We must keep on asking for it. The Bloc Québécois is submitting this request to the House. No other party has this approach. I have not seen the Liberals say that Quebec has to be given \$328 million, or the NDP, or the Conservatives. However we are able to do this, because we are elected by the population of Quebec to defend the interests of Quebec.

In the end, the clearest message is that, if Quebeckers controlled the entire toolbox, if they had all of their income taxes, in no way would they be forced to seek this \$328 million from a government that is depending on another majority. Quebec could decide this in its national parliament, the National Assembly of Quebec. This is why the ultimate solution for the development of Quebec is to be found through sovereignty.

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• (1520)

Mr. Thierry St-Cyr (Jeanne-Le Ber, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is interesting to compare the Conservative and the Liberal stand on the environment.

The record of the Liberals after 13 years in power is pretty dismal. The Liberals kept saying they wanted to reach the targets set out in the Kyoto protocol, but they never did anything to get there. The Conservative approach is different. They say these targets are out of reach, and they do not want to do anything about it. Indeed, the only difference between the two is that the Conservatives are aware they are incompetent, but the Liberals did not know they were.

Here is my question: if we realize that, in this Parliament, we are not able to get the support of the government to reach these targets and help Quebec move forward, what solution is left to Quebecers to take their own responsibilities and make their own choices?

Mr. Paul Crête: The Bloc Quebecois is using all the democratic and parliamentary means at their disposal under the mandate they got from their constituents. That is why we are putting this kind of issue on the floor.

Members and ministers from Quebec, and ministers who are in charge of various issues know that this \$328 million would be put to good use for the environment.

The Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities should be well aware that this would have a significant and positive impact on public transit and improve the environment.

This is the situation we are in with the present system. I think that the solution is that Quebecers should become sovereign to be able to make their own decisions with regard to the environment and everything else.

Hon. Lawrence Cannon (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to inform you that I will share my time with my colleague, the Secretary of State for Agriculture.

All political parties in the House of Commons hope to govern the country one day, except the Bloc Québécois. Its supreme ambition is to sit eternally in the opposition. All parties work hard to win the *Super Bowl* of Canadian politics, except the Bloc Québécois. The members of the Bloc Québécois are happy to sit in the stands, criticizing the teams on the field.

Today, the leader of the Bloc Québécois is proposing a resolution asking the government of Canada money for the government of Quebec. Last week, however, the leader of the Bloc Québécois supported a motion from the Liberal Party sponsored by the very man who personifies the futility and inefficiency of the environmental policy followed by the previous government.

But in its platform, during the election campaign, the Bloc was far less enthusiastic about the actions of the previous minister of the Environment. Here is what the platform said about the so-called plan from the previous minister: "This plan will not allow Canada to reach its objectives. It applies the polluter-paid principle and it is especially inequitable towards Quebec. Therefore, it is an awful plan".

For the benefit of the leader of the Bloc Québécois and in response to his resolution, I will summarize what a government that takes its responsibilities seriously is doing to protect and restore the quality of our environment. There needs to be political will to establish a fair balance between environmental protection and economic growth, political will amongst all political parties and all governments.

This is why we welcome all the propositions to improve our clean air act, wherever they come from. What was the Bloc Québécois saying on clean air during the last election? Nothing at all. Not a word on that subject. The Bloc claims that it can achieve Quebec's sovereignty, but when it goes go before the public during an election campaign, it cannot even bring forward one single measure to improve the quality of the air that we breathe.

In fact, the emperor has no clothes.

As the Prime Minister said during his speech on Tuesday, the fundamental challenge that Canada is faced with now is to make real progress in the area of environmental protection while maintaining jobs and our standard of living. Our new government has already announced a number of tangible measures.

For example, for the first time ever in Canada, we will be moving to regulate greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution from major industrial sectors. For the first time ever in Canada, we will be moving to regulate the fuel efficiency of motor vehicles, beginning with the 2011 model year. For the first time ever in Canada, we will be setting out enforceable regulatory targets for the short, medium and long term.

Canada's new government will implement new ecoenergy programs to support energy efficiency and stimulate the production of clean, renewable power. It will mandate greater use of ethanol and other renewable fuels. It will introduce measures to make energy efficient vehicles more affordable. It will provide better protection from hazardous chemicals through its new chemical management plan, and it will support new projects to preserve Canada's wilderness.

As the Prime Minister said, the actions of Canada's new government are rooted in the values and aspirations of all Canadians to serve our ultimate goal: a stronger, safer, better Canada.

• (1525)

The department I head is very aware that the activity for which it is responsible, transportation, is a large contributor to the problem of the deterioration of our environment. That is why we will be playing a key role in solving that problem.

Transportation is one of the biggest sources of air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions in Canada. Transportation is largely responsible for smog: 59% of the carbon emissions and 53% of the nitrogen oxide emissions that pollute our cities. In our ports, marine transportation is the source of nearly 41% of sulphur oxide pollution.

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We therefore cannot have a significant impact on greenhouse gases without taking energy-related measures to reduce emissions generated by the transportation industry. That is why the new government has made transportation issues central to its environment planning.

The portfolio of the Department of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities is also where the major issues of concern to governments and the public converge: economic productivity, transportation safety, sustainable development and quality of life in cities and communities.

Among other things, we are committed to transfer \$5 billion in fuel tax revenues over five years to support an environmentally sustainable municipal infrastructure. In due course, Quebec will receive \$1.52 billion of that amount.

In the 2006 budget, we also announced an investment of \$1.3 billion in public transit. Of that amount, \$400 million was transferred to the provinces and territories in 2005-2006.

We also provided a new tax credit for people who buy monthly or long-term public transit passes. This credit, which can be claimed for every member of a family, amounts to two free months out of twelve. This kills two birds with one stone since it leaves more money in people's pockets and helps reduce air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions.

Never before have we seen, in only one year, such a big investment in mass transit or as much support from the government to Canada's mass transit sector.

These funds provide predictable funding to the municipalities and, as such, are giving them a fabulous boost, allowing them to simultaneously increase their transit capacities, reduce traffic jams and control air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions.

I should also point out that provincial transport ministers are the ones who approve the investments made by the transportation corporations that are funded through this initiative.

So, the provinces and territories have all the necessary leeway to fund any public transportation project that is deemed necessary.

• (1530)

Under this initiative, Quebec received \$94.4 million. What was left of the \$1.3 billion went to the public transit capital trust. This \$900 million trust, from which Quebec received \$210.8 million, has enabled that province to invest in the public transit infrastructure, based on its own priorities and needs, including in the rapid public transit system, intelligent transportation systems and other initiatives, such as reserved lanes for high occupancy vehicles and for bicycles.

These investments will impact significantly on the provision of public transit services. We are convinced that if we increase services, the number of users will also increase. The new Government of Canada is also investing in the demand side. We want to encourage people to use public transit.

The motion presented by the member for Laurier—Sainte-Marie deals with the fundamental issue of financial transfers between the Government of Canada and the provinces, and particularly equalization.

I remind the House that in 2006-07, for example, Quebec received \$5.5 billion in equalization payments. This is money that it can use at its discretion, including for environmental initiatives.

Moreover, the Minister of Finance recently informed his Quebec counterpart that, in 2007-08, the province will be getting at least \$6.5 billion in equalization payments, until a new formula is announced, something that is expected in the 2007 budget.

The 2006 budget also detailed the commitments made by the federal government to restore fiscal balance by using an approach based primarily on five major principles, including accountability through clarity of roles and responsibilities, financial responsibility and budget transparency. The other two are predictable long term fiscal arrangements and a competitive and efficient economic union. So—

• (1535)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Andrew Scheer): The hon. member for Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel.

Mr. Mario Laframboise (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to the presentation by the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities. I would just like to point out to him that, from 1970 to 1999, the federal government invested \$66 billion in the development of hydrocarbons, petroleum products and fossil energies, but invested nothing at all in the development of clean energies such as hydroelectricity in Quebec.

As a Quebecker, I am very comfortable with not being in power and standing up for the values of Quebeckers, unlike the minister, who is in power and going against the values of Quebeckers. Regarding the amount of \$328 million, I do not think that it is too much to ask, given that \$66 billion was spent on developing hydrocarbons and fossil energies and that one-quarter of that money came from Quebec.

Hon. Lawrence Cannon: Mr. Speaker, I clearly heard my hon. colleague come out with his big figures. What I just said was that, in the past year, Quebec received nearly \$300 and some million to invest in public transit. Yours truly was very vocal in demanding everywhere that we be allowed to invest in transit companies to ensure, first, accessible transportation for everyone and, second, congestion reduction, thereby reducing polluting emissions.

The government did act on this issue and it is working closely with the Government of Quebec, because we sincerely believe that something has to be done to reduce greenhouse gas and polluting emissions.

Government Orders

[English]

Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the federal government could help the province of Quebec and all of the provinces in fact reach their Kyoto targets with one simple measure. The Government of Canada owns roughly 68,000 buildings across Canada. Many of them were built in an era when energy conservation was not an issue; they are wasteful and older. The government also leases space in many buildings that are of a similar vintage.

Through its energy retrofit program, the federal building initiative, it has renovated I believe less than 1,200 buildings total out of 68,000 and usually just in very simplistic ways, such as changing the light bulbs to a different type of ballast, et cetera, picking the low-hanging fruit.

I am sure the minister is aware that a unit of energy harvested from the existing system by demand side management measures is indistinguishable from a unit of energy generated at a generating station, except for a couple of important things. It is available at one-third the cost. It creates seven times the number of jobs. It is available and online immediately for resale to someone else. It saves greenhouse gas emissions. These are all huge pluses.

Would the minister not agree that one thing the feds could do immediately without even an outpouring of cash to the provinces would be to clean up those energy wasteful buildings?

Hon. Lawrence Cannon: Mr. Speaker, there are suggestions such as the one that has been put forward by my colleague as well as others that have been put forward by his political party which we believe sincerely are very conducive to diminishing greenhouse gases and diminishing the atmospheric particles that we breathe.

Surely my hon. colleague is aware that the Minister of Public Works and Government Services has been working on that file. If I am not mistaken, I believe the Government of Canada has invested in that area and is continuing to invest in that area. The member is correct that there is a way of doing things and we should be looking at that.

Hon. Roy Cullen (Etobicoke North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, one of the issues that is clouding the transportation environment is the issue around ground rents. Of course we want very efficient ground rents.

We want to have a very efficient air transportation system. The Greater Toronto Airport Authority is being charged ground rents that are unfair. It is being charged ground rents comprising 50% of the ground rents to the federal government, when the amount of traffic through GTA and Toronto was around 30% to 35%. The reason for that is the heavy debt load. The GTAA has had to recapitalize, invest huge amounts in capital. Will the minister deal with this inequity right away?

• (1540)

Hon. Lawrence Cannon: Mr. Speaker, my colleague's question is interesting. I have heard many representations on that specific issue. I will remind my hon. colleague, though, that my predecessor, who is now a radio host, did in effect—

Hon. Lucienne Robillard: And a good one.

Hon. Lawrence Cannon: Yes, I agree with my colleague that he probably is an excellent radio announcer. However, he did not do enough to help the GTAA. He did put a proposal forward which a lot of the airports, indeed 99%, bought into.

The problem is that the Greater Toronto Airport Authority has not bought into that proposal that was there. So there is an opportunity for the folks in Toronto to bring down the costs of their rent if they sign on to the proposal that was put forward by my hon. colleague.

[Translation]

Hon. Christian Paradis (Secretary of State (Agriculture), CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to address the House today to speak to the government's commitment to the environment in Canada and Quebec. Canada's new government understands Canadians' concerns about the environment and the quality of the air that we all breathe, and has made this a priority.

What this means to us is that we will take meaningful action, action that is concrete and realistic, to reduce harmful pollutants in the air that Canadians breathe, pollutants that are a constant threat to our health, our economy and our quality of life.

The previous government embarked on a plan that did nothing to solve the problem of the smog that threatens Canadians' health. It is wholly unacceptable for Canadians who suffer from asthma to be getting regular warnings to stay inside on a summer afternoon because of smog. The most vulnerable people in our society, our children and the elderly, deserve better.

That is why Canada's new government is taking unprecedented action to reduce both air pollution and greenhouse gases. Despite all the rhetoric spouted by the Liberals and the Bloc Québécois, the fact remains that since the previous government signed the Kyoto protocol, greenhouse gas levels have been rising constantly in Canada.

This government has not been content to talk about the need to reduce greenhouse gases; we have taken steps to do it.

Our government will tackle all sources of atmospheric emissions, but today I would like to focus on the concrete measures that we are proposing to Canadians to fight emissions generated by transportation.

Transportation is one of the biggest sources of air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions in Canada. It will play a key role in efforts to improve air quality for all Canadians.

Total greenhouse gas emissions associated with transportation rose by 25% between 1990 and 2003, and the situation is even worse in Quebec, where transportation is the largest source of greenhouse gases, accounting for nearly 40% of emissions.

That is why I am so proud of the many achievements of our government in significantly reducing emissions from that source, as my colleague said earlier.

Government Orders

I am thinking, in particular, of the amendments we are proposing to the Motor Vehicle Fuel Consumption Standards Act, which will, for the first time, allow the government of Canada to establish mandatory standards for motor vehicle energy efficiency.

I am also proud of the series of measures we included in our 2006 budget, only a few months after being elected. We have for example allocated \$1.3 billion to public transit in order to ease traffic congestion in urban areas, reduce carbon dioxide emissions and improve the quality of life in our cities. We have also invested \$900 million in a trust that will support capital investments in public transit infrastructure, as well as \$400 million in funding to be provided through agreements with the provinces and territories.

Since September 2006, all appropriate authorities have had access to this public transit trust, and most of the agreements have been signed. We have also maintained part of the federal gas tax transfer to the provinces and territories, which will amount to \$5 billion over five years. The funding coming from the gas tax fund should help the creation of ecologically viable municipal infrastructures, including public transit.

We also want to encourage people to leave their cars at home and use public transit systems. This is why we have created a new tax credit for those who buy transit passes valid for at least one month. An individual who buys an \$80 pass every month will save up to \$150 in taxes over a year.

Believe it or not, even though these accomplishments are impressive, they are not all. Our government has also made a firm promise to ensure that a rising proportion of the gasoline consumed in Canada consists of renewable fuel. For starters we have proposed a regulation that will require an annual average of at least 5% renewable fuel calculated on the basis of gasoline volume beginning in 2010.

Canada's new government also intends to require an average 2% content of renewable fuel in diesel and fuel oil, after having reviewed the use of renewable diesel fuel in Canadian conditions. This requirement should take effect by 2012.

These new requirements will make it possible to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by about four megatonnes a year, which is the equivalent of about a million vehicles taken out of circulation insofar as greenhouse gases are concerned.

In December, we announced \$345 million to finance two agricultural programs supporting the development of biofuels and other bioproducts. The \$145-million agricultural bioproducts innovation program and the \$200-million capital formation assistance program for renewable fuels production will help strengthen Canada's position in the realm of biofuels. These programs will provide farmers with the capital they need to build or expand biofuel and biomass production facilities.

●(1545)

These programs are important steps forward toward achieving the government's 2010 and 2012 targets, while at the same time creating new economic opportunities for our farmers here in Canada. The more farmers help to produce biofuels, the faster we will achieve our cleaner air targets for 2010 and 2012.

Canada's new government also believes that it is important for farmers to have a role in making biofuels enhance rural prosperity by investing in their farms and enhancing their contribution to the value chain. This is not just idle talk. We will provide all of Canada's regions with real opportunities to take a green route.

Canada will not be satisfied with empty rhetoric. After 13 years of Liberal inaction and neglect, Canada's new government has made the environment one of its priorities. As for the Bloc Québécois, it can keep on making fine speeches that will never amount to anything.

I am proud as a Quebecker of the leadership Quebec has shown on climate change. We have a shining reputation for renewable energy and energy efficiency.

I firmly believe that the road chosen by our government will allow Quebeckers and other Canadians to benefit from a healthy environment in years to come, and that is what counts above all.

Our success will depend on the concerted effort of all levels of government, the private sector and all Canadians. I am convinced that, as in the past, we will be up to the challenge and we will deliver.

[*English*]

Mr. Brent St. Denis (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusking, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to the parliamentary secretary's comments and it occurred to me as I listened to him and other members of the government speak on climate change, in particular the Kyoto protocol, that if one is trying to rally a group of people around a cause, for example, a coach of a football team which is a few points behind and the coach wants to win that game, the coach talks to the team about winning.

I am confused by the government's words to the effect that it will not accept the Kyoto protocol and the obligations that come with it. Is it not better for government to aim high, to rally the nation around a goal which is an international goal, rather than to speak in terms which are defeatist? The Conservatives say it is impossible to reach these objectives and why should we even try.

I am wondering if the parliamentary secretary would not agree with me that aiming high is a call to the nation that the public will readily receive.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Christian Paradis: Mr. Speaker, I thank the honourable member for his comments.

I will use his metaphor. Let us be clear and honest. When the previous government signed the Kyoto protocol, it was the beginning of the season. The government said: "If you feel like winning, go ahead. If not, there is nothing to worry about. It will all be voluntary action".

So, when we took over, a year ago, we had to pick up the pieces. Even the leader of the official opposition now says that the targets cannot be attained in the short term.

Government Orders

This government came and said that there needed to be a change of culture. The lack of discipline needed to stop. Now we say: "If you do not win, you will not make the playoffs". This is somewhat the metaphor my colleague was using.

For the first time, a government will impose mandatory targets, and industries will have to comply. Canada will become a world leader, and we will have the credibility to convince large emitters, such as China and the United States, to join us because the problem has now become severe.

• (1550)

Mr. Thierry St-Cyr (Jeanne-Le Ber, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I stood up and almost fell back into my chair when I heard the Conservative member say that the problem was serious. We really do not get the impression that such is the general perception in the Conservative Party.

Earlier, the Minister of Transport mentioned that there was nothing on air quality in the Bloc Québécois program. I did a quick search on the Internet. I would like to point out that there is nothing on Kyoto in the Conservative program. If they thought this was a serious problem they would have taken the time to include something about Kyoto and global warming on their site. That is the least we could expect.

They also talked about wanting to restrict companies. And yet, there are still no objectives or absolute targets.

My question is the following. Can we envisage something other than Kyoto as a minimal acceptable target to protect our planet and to protect Quebec industry and Quebec society? Does the hon. member not think that the Kyoto targets are a starting point and that we have to do more, not less?

Hon. Christian Paradis: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for his question. When we have a serious problem, what do we do? We set mandatory standards. That has never been done. Never has a government dared to do that before us. Never will the Bloc Québécois have the audacity to say it will regulate.

I currently sit on the legislative committee dealing with Bill C-30. We have heard experts such as Claude Villeneuve say yesterday that, in the current state of affairs and since nothing happened in the past 10 years, we cannot meet our obligations in the very short term.

We have to set mandatory targets and that is what we are trying to do. We are introducing a bill. We are asking the Bloc Québécois to help pass this bill so that we can finally set restrictive targets. However, as long as this bill is blocked, we will not be able to do anything. People need to realize that this government is determined to act in a clear, compelling and concrete manner.

Mrs. Carole Freeman (Châteauguay—Saint-Constant, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel.

For more than a decade, the international scientific community has pointed out the urgent need to do something about climate change before it is too late. It is now one minute to midnight.

All members of this House have surely noted that nature is showing obvious and worrisome signs of climate disturbance. The

number of abrupt and severe weather events such as tropical storms, hurricanes, droughts, forest fires and so forth, is on the rise.

The accelerated melting of the ice cap at the North Pole is so severe and rapid that, along with raising sea levels, it is endangering all polar fauna and upsetting all geostrategies in this sector. We are not dealing with a time span of one or two centuries, but rather one of only 50 years.

Smog episodes last longer and occur more frequently in our major cities. Smog advisories are often issued in the Greater Montreal area in which my riding is found.

These are but a few examples and they do not adequately express the extent of the problem or the need to take action. The list of repercussions arising from global warming is long and quite overwhelming. I refuse to be an alarmist. However, it is disturbing to observe these events and to realize that the impact of these changes will be even greater for my children.

Scientists from around the world unequivocally sounded the alarm recently in the conclusion to the report drafted by 550 experts of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, held in Paris on January 26. They revealed, to no one's surprise, that our planet earth is warming faster than anticipated. What is the cause? No doubt about it—human beings and their activities that generate greenhouse gases.

Unfortunately, there are still naysayers who hide behind biased arguments to justify a laissez-faire approach. It is sad to see individuals trying to use economic arguments to circumvent Kyoto. Even the recent report from Nicholas Stern, former chief economist of the World Bank, recommends that every country invest up to one per cent of GDP in the fight against climate change to avoid economic losses of up to \$7,500 billion globally. These losses are equal to 20 times the amount needed at present to counter this phenomenon.

But some will still try to deny the facts. Unlike those who see the Kyoto protocol as a "socialist scheme", I am proud to see that Quebec wants to do its share for the whole planet and for all the future generations that will live on it. The Quebec nation wants to be part of the progressive movement that Kyoto represents and join the concert of nations in fighting climate change.

We in Quebec believe that the Kyoto targets are achievable. We believe that climate change is an inescapable reality. Quebec's achievements on this issue are unequivocal: in 2004, it had the best record in Canada for greenhouse gas emissions, at 12 tonnes per capita. This is clearly below the Canadian average of 23.7 tonnes per capita.

Moreover, between 1990 and 2004, while greenhouse gas emissions in Quebec increased by 6.1%, they increased by 39.4% in Alberta and by 61.7% in Saskatchewan. And I must point out that the increase recorded in Quebec was largely due to the transportation sector, which is a major problem in all industrialized countries.

Government Orders

Far from letting the situation get worse, and avoiding the kind of lethargy shown by the federal government, Quebec developed its own plan to fight climate change, but it is still missing \$328 million to meet its reduction target of 6% below 1990 levels. I remind members that this is a target that was negotiated by the federal government and that is important to a vast majority of Quebecers.

That is why I join my party in asking that the federal government give immediately to Quebec the \$328 million it needs to meet the Kyoto protocol targets. I find it deplorable that Quebec's efforts in fighting climate change are hindered by the current federal government. In refusing to give that money to Quebec, the Canadian government is sending a clear signal that it is not willing to encourage those provinces that truly want to make an effort to meet the Kyoto targets and that have developed plans that differ from the ones proposed by the federal government.

• (1555)

I was mentioning earlier the observable trends in climate disturbances and the concerns that they raise. I was saying how these changes were drastic and sudden. It is sad to see that even though Quebec is making every effort to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions and limit environmental damage, it remains stuck in a situation where the federal government is taking very little concrete action to reduce greenhouse gases and other provinces are reluctant to hurt their corporate polluters. Does Quebec need to prove that had it been sovereign, it would have achieved its goals many years ago?

Indeed, the federal government's inaction in dealing with greenhouse gases needs no scientific proof; the facts speak for themselves. During the 13 years they were in power, the Liberals dragged their feet to the point that they forgot the Protocol targets. They increased the number of voluntary-based programs, which were not very successful, instead of opting for real solutions such as the territorial approach that we are proposing, or the implementation of a carbon exchange. In the end, greenhouse gas emissions increased by a third on their watch. Moreover, at that time, the Liberals refused to give Quebec the \$328 million needed to meet the Kyoto protocol targets.

The then environment minister insisted on imposing funding conditions, which derailed the negotiations, even though the Government of Quebec was the only one to clearly indicate its intention to meet the Kyoto targets. While his own plan was far from effective, as evidenced by the close to 30% increase in greenhouse gas emissions under the Liberal reign, the leader of the Liberal Party preferred to lecture Quebec.

Since the Conservatives have taken office, the situation has become chaotic. Having eliminated programs introduced by the Liberals, they then turned around and revived them in order to look green. Moreover, this government completely stopped using the word "Kyoto", because it was becoming synonymous with "unattainable", if not suggestive of a vile "socialist scheme" that would ruin Canada sooner or later.

Certainly, we should not expect change anytime soon. The Prime Minister himself, in an address delivered on Tuesday, February 6, before the Ottawa Canadian Club, again contrasted environmental action with economic development, whereas Quebec has everything to gain by setting large reduction targets. I remind the House that

Quebec's industries are already world leaders, with processes and technologies based on clean transport and energy.

I emphasize once again that it is this government, in which the ministers directly concerned do not believe in the Kyoto protocol, that is now trying to look green, although it is unable to meet its own deadlines for the determination of targets. In this regard, the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities said on October 15, 2006, that the \$328 million was a promise of the previous government. He noted that there had been negotiations, but that they derailed and that the Conservative approach was different. He even added that there would be no negotiations other than those he had had with the Quebec Minister of Finance on the whole infrastructure program.

The intransigence of the federal government has to be compared with my party's proposal for a territorial approach, which is a flexible solution. In fact, the federal government should abide by some basic principles, namely, honouring our international commitments, fairness in the level of effort imposed and full respect for Quebec's jurisdiction. These are three principles that Ottawa has consistently ignored in the climate change file.

That is why my party demands that the federal plan include a mechanism that would allow a bilateral agreement with Quebec based on a territorial approach. Such an agreement should give Quebec the financial tools it needs to implement the most effective measures for reducing greenhouse gas emissions on its territory.

We have proposals for respecting the Kyoto protocol, which would reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 6% compared to 1990. We are proposing that the federal government impose strict greenhouse gas emission standards on motor vehicles, give allowances to those who buy ecological vehicles, provide major financial support for renewable energy development, eliminate tax breaks for oil companies, and give subsidies to organizations which help reach the Kyoto targets.

• (1600)

Mr. Gilles-A. Perron (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I wish to congratulate my colleague from Châteauguay—Saint-Constant for her wonderful speech.

In my opinion, greenhouse gases are every Canadian's business. I will share my own experience with my colleague. I have had a hybrid car since early in 2003. I will brag a little and say that I was the first member of Parliament on the Hill to buy such a car. Now that I am through promoting myself, I have a question for my friend.

I would like her to share her comments. What does she think of the polluter pay principle?

Mrs. Carole Freeman: Mr. Speaker, I thank my honourable colleague for his question on polluter pay.

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Obviously, for years now, Quebec has been making enormous efforts to meet the targets, while other provinces are making I would say incredible efforts to pollute more. We could mention, for example, the tar sands and all the pollution already produced and yet to be produced.

The problem is, who will pay now and later to clean all this up?

As we know, Quebec is sharing costs up to 25%. So, we are making enormous efforts to try and have clean energy and reach our targets. On the other hand, we have the polluters. I think they should pay more and certainly not have any tax benefits. They should also be cleaning up the mess they are creating right now.

• (1605)

Mr. Thierry St-Cyr (Jeanne-Le Ber, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I also have a question for my colleague in reaction to the speech made earlier by the parliamentary secretary, who spoke about the clean air bill. He boasted that there would be targets and restrictive measures.

The problem is, I believe, that he is mixing up two things. He confuses air pollution, which causes smog and respiratory ailments, with greenhouse gases, which contribute to global warming. It is not the same thing at all.

As for air pollutants, we can deal with them by, for example, putting filters on our vehicles. Of course, the greenhouse gases are not collected by these filters, and the only way to reduce these emissions is to reduce our use of oil to start with. That will help us reduce greenhouse gas emissions and also, consequently, air pollutants.

It is surprising to see that the Conservatives do not differentiate between the two or refuse to do so. It could be that they are attempting to confuse Canadians. Nonetheless, there are no targets and no restrictive measures in terms of the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, even in the clear air bill.

Does my colleague think that the Conservatives would be well advised to invite a scientific advisor who could explain to them the difference between the two?

Mrs. Carole Freeman: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

I have to say that I agree with him when he says that we should ask experts to do the math. It seems to me that it is very difficult for the governing party to properly assess the costs and the many problems that we have with greenhouse gases.

I agree with my colleague. We really need experts to help the government, otherwise we will never see the end of it.

Mr. Mario Laframboise (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to speak on the subject of the motion tabled this morning by the leader of the Bloc Québécois. I feel it is important to reread the motion, because the Bloc Québécois is not asking the House for the moon. The motion reads as follows:

That, having recognized the principle of complying with the Kyoto targets, it is the opinion of this House that the government should provide the Government of Quebec with the sum of \$328 million to enable it to implement its plan to meet the Kyoto Protocol targets.

Reality is sometimes harsh for the Conservatives members of this House. Even though they gave in to pressure from the Bloc

Québécois and agreed to recognize Quebec as a nation, they are still not really doing anything to acknowledge Quebec's nationhood. The environment file is a flagrant example of this.

Quebec's National Assembly is the only legislative body in Canada that has chosen to comply with the Kyoto protocol targets. I would like to say to the citizens who are listening to us now that if Quebec were a country, it would have signed the Kyoto protocol; if it had full control over taxation, it would have reached those targets.

The problem is that we are part of the Canadian federation. To meet the targets, Quebec has to ask for money. Once again, Quebec has asked the federal government to turn over \$328 million so the province can meet the Kyoto protocol targets. I should mention that the federal government collects over 50% of all taxes and income taxes in Quebec. That is the reality we are facing.

It is important to note that this is not about partisan politics; the request came from a Liberal government. This was a unanimous resolution in Quebec's National Assembly, which requested that the federal government contribute \$328 million toward achieving the Government of Quebec's targets.

This plan is not illusory or virtual; it is a written plan that environmentalists have recognized as being the best in Canada and the most likely to reach the Kyoto protocol targets. I hope that all members of this House will recognize that. If not, I would invite them to visit the Government of Quebec's website to learn more about what it is doing and what it intends to do.

It is simple. Quebec has always been much closer to reaching the Kyoto targets, because Quebecers made a choice in the past, the choice to invest in clean energy. We are specialists and leaders in the field of clean energy, hydroelectricity, now wind energy, and so on. Quebecers made that choice. Canadians, however, have not made that choice.

I will illustrate this in figures. Between 1970 and 1999, Canada gave \$66 billion in direct subsidies to the fossil fuel industry—coal, natural gas and oil. Here are some more examples: Canada spent \$13.6 billion on the oil import compensation program; \$11.1 billion on the national energy program; \$7.7 billion on the petroleum incentives program, for oil and gas exploration; and \$1.22 billion on Hibernia in Newfoundland and Labrador.

While this \$66 billion was being invested, there was nothing for hydroelectricity in Quebec. Quebecers paid one quarter of this \$66 billion, through income tax and other taxes sent to Ottawa, representing more than 50%. Ottawa used some of that money to invest in fossil fuels. Of course, even though Quebec paid one quarter of it, not a cent came back to Quebec. Zero minus zero equals zero, no matter how many times you multiply. No one in this House would dare to rise and say that any money was invested in hydroelectricity in Quebec. No.

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Quebeckers decided to invest in hydroelectricity, through their taxes, their income tax, and the fees they pay. Quebeckers made this choice as a society. Now, all countries have recognized that urgent action is needed.

Last week, the Minister of the Environment was very surprised to learn that experts agree that humans are to blame for greenhouse gases. He learned that. Quebeckers, however, learned that a long time ago and chose to invest in clean energy such as hydroelectricity and wind power.

Admittedly, it is not true that the federal government did not invest a cent in Canada during this time—it just did not invest a cent in Quebec. And although it invested \$66 billion in fossil fuels, it invested \$329 million in renewable energies between 1970 and 1999.

Canada chose to invest in fossil fuels, while Quebec decided to invest in clean energy. That is a fact.

• (1610)

The problem today is that no one wants to help Quebec. Why does the government not want to pay the \$328 million? It is just a drop in the bucket, compared to the \$66 billion invested in fossil fuels. In fact, there is a Liberal member who knows this. The problem is that when she was in power, she did not do anything about it. Once again, the Liberals and the Conservatives make all kinds of excuses, but in the end, not a single cent will go to Quebec. Quebec is still waiting anxiously to see whether the federal government will pay it \$328 million. I repeat: this is a portion of the taxes we send to Ottawa.

You will understand that Quebeckers are gradually going to wake up to what is happening. It is all well and good to recognize Quebec as a nation, but the problem is that those are just words and that the government is never willing to help improve that nation. One day, Quebeckers will take charge of their own destiny. They will make that choice.

Obviously it does not end there because that \$66 billion was just for direct investments in the fossil fuel industry. On top of that there were improvements to the tax system. In 2003, the Liberals, with the support of the Conservatives, improved the oil companies' tax situation, as if they were not rich enough. For 2003-2004 they were granted \$55 million in tax credits. In 2004-2005 it was \$100 million and in 2007-2008 \$260 million. So the oil companies' tax credits go on increasing because the Liberals and Conservatives decided that they felt sorry for them. On top of being given money to invest and do research, they are given tax credits to encourage them to make more money and pay out more quarterly dividends to their shareholders. In the end, that is what is done to make the shareholders, who are probably friends of the Liberals and Conservatives, happy. Probably they are the oil companies' biggest shareholders. Personally I do not have any oil company shares.

After that they were also granted tax reductions of 65% between 2005 and 2008. So, in addition to being given credits, they are given tax reductions. In 2005 it was \$5.1 billion and in 2006, \$4.6 billion. It will be \$3.2 billion in 2007 and \$2.35 billion in 2008. That is in addition to all the funds granted by the federal government. So when the oil companies are granted tax reductions, these are revenues that

are not available to invest elsewhere, such as \$328 million in Quebec.

When I say that Canada and Quebec are really two different worlds, I would just like to mention a few differences. We have to understand that the realities are different.

Oil is enriching Canada, but it is impoverishing Quebec. Obviously, since petroleum development takes place outside Quebec, for those places the economy is going great guns. Furthermore, on account of all the money invested by the federal government in this sector, Canada has become the third largest oil producer in the world.

When the price of gas goes up, the economy takes an upturn, as does the Canadian dollar. Quebec has no oil and gas industry. It does not even have an auto industry, once again because of a choice made by the federal government. The auto industry is in Ontario. There ought to be an aerospace industry in Quebec, but as we have seen from the Boeing C-17 contract, there will be virtually no more aerospace investments in Quebec, once again, the choice of the Conservatives.

So we are faced with a reality. Ontario has its auto industry and the West its oil patch. They want us to keep using gas to drive our cars, when Quebec is manufacturing public transport equipment, buses, trains and so on. This is a choice Quebec made.

Quebec and Norway are the two countries with the highest green energy production in the world. Again, a choice. The question we are still asking, as are Quebecers and the excellent members of the Bloc Québécois, is why is the federal government refusing Quebec's request to invest \$328 million in its plan to meet the Kyoto targets?

Is it because the rest of Canada is a little jealous of Quebec's position? Is it out of a desire to be harder on Quebec?

• (1615)

I hope my Conservative, Liberal and NDP colleagues will vote in favour of the Bloc Québécois motion. Quebecers must have a portion of their past and present taxes returned to them, taxes they have paid, and will pay, on fossil fuels, by allowing them to recover \$328 million. Quebec could be the first Canadian province, and likely also the first area of North America, to meet the Kyoto protocol targets. We all hope that this will be the case.

Mr. Marcel Lussier (Brossard—La Prairie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the hon. member for Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel on his presentation.

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I would just like to have his opinion on a statement I found in a Department of Transport report that is a few years old. It would be a good idea for our minister to reactivate this report. Experts hired by the Department of Transport were saying that the 10¢ excise tax that the federal government is collecting on gasoline is accumulating substantial funds, funds totalling billions of dollars. The report said that most of the proceeds of this 10¢ tax should be reinvested in Quebec and Canadian infrastructures suffering from underfunding, such as municipal infrastructures, roads and bridges.

Does my colleague have any figures that might tell us how much of this 10¢ is going back into Quebec or municipal infrastructures?

Mr. Mario Laframboise: Mr. Speaker, the answer to the first part of my colleague's question is quite simple. We are facing an infrastructure deficit because in the 1990s the federal government decided to cut transfers to the provinces. I know that the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities is aware of this, because at the time he was in municipal government, as I was. He was affected by the savage cuts in federal-provincial transfers. Afterward, the provinces cut the budgets of the municipalities and school boards. Then, the municipalities and provincial governments invested less in their infrastructures, and today we have a record deficit in terms of infrastructures in bad condition.

Indeed, what all organizations concerned directly or indirectly with infrastructure are recommending to the federal government is that all of the 10¢ tax be invested in infrastructure programs, in compensation for the savage cuts in the 1990s.

Let there be no doubt. The infrastructure problem, including public transit, is only one part of what the Kyoto protocol represents. I think that the federal government will try to tell us that by solving public transit they will solve the problem, and the Kyoto targets can be achieved. However the reality is completely different.

The Government of Quebec is already further along than that. As I said earlier, we are producing public transit equipment. We need money to purchase this and provide our communities and our cities with this equipment. However we must also encourage the government of Quebec to continue investing in clean energy, in hydroelectricity and wind power. It must enter into partnerships with all the other countries of the world so that Quebec can achieve its greenhouse gas reduction targets.

Once again, these targets will be achieved in part through investment in infrastructures and public transit, and in part through other projects. That is why the federal government must not put limitations on Quebec. Quebec knows where it is going, unlike the federal government which does not know where it is going. There is the tragedy and the danger.

The federal government must be told to invest in infrastructure programs, but that is not how the Kyoto targets are going to be met. It is part of the answer, but Quebec has to be given the money it needs, because it has a real plan. It is the only province that has a plan, and it will be the first territory in North America to achieve the targets of the Kyoto protocol.

• (1620)

Mr. Thierry St-Cyr (Jeanne-Le Ber, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am very happy to have the opportunity to speak once again on this very

important issue and to take advantage of the cosmic vacuum left on this issue by the Conservatives who do not dare comment on the Bloc motion.

The government has told us that it could take action and change things. It told us that it was not the government that had given the incentives and the fiscal gifts to the oil and gas companies. What can be said, however, is that the government has still not done anything to cancel any of those gifts the oil and gas companies benefit from.

Today at the Standing Committee on Finance, I tabled a motion that the committee study the money and the fiscal incentives given to the oil and gas companies. I also asked that the committee comment on the possibility of transferring those incentives to the renewable energy sector. The committee members voted in favour of this motion, except for the Conservative members of course.

Does my colleague not think that all this is in fact proof that the only interests the Conservatives are protecting are those of the oil and gas companies?

Mr. Mario Laframboise: Mr. Speaker, my colleague is entirely correct, and I repeat it for anyone who will listen: I would rather be a member from Quebec who stands up for the values of Quebeckers who are pro-environment, who support the Kyoto protocol, than a Conservative member from Quebec who can do nothing, who sits in cabinet, who will not stand up to tell this government straight out that it is moving ahead, but not in the right direction.

[English]

Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise and speak to the Bloc Québécois motion on the need to restore the funding promised by the previous government to the province of Quebec. With the amendments that have been accepted from our party, we have a very interesting opportunity to discuss this issue.

I agree with the member for Laurier—Sainte-Marie on most of the points he makes. However, my experience in federal-provincial energy relations stems back to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities. In early 2000 I was appointed to the council that dealt with the fund. Early on we received numerous applications from municipalities in the province of Quebec. They wished to use innovation to develop new ways to deal with energy and to improve the systems that ran their communities.

It was not long before the provincial government at that time shut that whole opportunity down for the municipalities of Quebec. Those great ideas, which we saw in applications for the first six months, were shelved. It was an inter-jurisdictional dispute about who could receive resources to apply them to good work. We have to be careful with territorial aspects to dealing with international and global problems and not recognizing the importance of local participation and local ability to share with other similar concerns across the country and perhaps even across the world.

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When we look territorially, we limit our scope. The types of projects that were presented in Quebec could well have been replicated across the country. The types of projects that we received in western Canada from municipalities could well have been used quite comfortably in Quebec. An arena in Weyburn, Saskatchewan is the same as an arena in Trois Rivières, Quebec. The problems are the same and the solutions are likely to be similar.

When we try to break things down into smaller parts, sometimes we find that the solutions, the opportunities and the results are not as good. Therefore, I want to be careful about this. That is my experience in the federal-provincial arena with energy related projects.

As well, at the federal-provincial level, we need cooperation on larger projects. When we talk about an east-west power grid, we need cooperation from Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba and Labrador and Newfoundland. We need to think together about the ways to solve the issues that come with providing the transportation links for renewable energy across the country. It is not good enough that we operate in isolation.

In fact, there is no doubt we even have to think with countries outside our borders. We cannot ignore the elephant to the south. We cannot ignore it as a reality in our energy picture in North America. If we ignore it, we are not doing our job for Canada, for the globe or for our province. In the end that will not work.

We have to be cognizant of the nature of the problem and the ways that we can look for solutions. We have to work together cooperatively at all levels, regardless of our aspirations on the political side. This is not a political issue. It is an environmental issue and a global catastrophe on the way.

• (1625)

The leader of the Bloc says that Canada must respect its international agreements on the environment. There are not too many ordinary Canadians who would argue with this.

The NDP has been fighting with the Conservatives and the Liberals to live up to Kyoto for years. We all voted in favour of such a motion only last week. It is so very good to see the House respecting and honouring that agreement. Unfortunately, we still have not seen action on it which can even come close to making our way toward Kyoto.

The member called for the introduction of a market for carbon, along with hard emissions caps and a policy of polluter pays. Those have long been the NDP's plans for a greener Canada.

In fact, last June when we put forward a plan which would save average Canadians money, create jobs and clean up the air, the NDP's plan said that a New Democratic Party would give fair notice to large emitters. Starting in 2008, permissible emissions would be capped and the cap would be annually reduced, with an eventual goal of 50% reduction in emissions by 2030.

This is the kind of thing we want to see happen in the House of Commons today. This is the kind of action that can deliver Canada a Kyoto strategy. This is what can make it work for all of us.

We also want to introduce a market based auction for available emissions credits in 2009, with credits divided among sectors. At the outset, the auction would cover less than 10% of available credits, with a goal of all emissions credits sold by auction by 2030. Proceeds from the sale of emissions credits would go to sustainability projects across the country.

That is real action, and it is good to see other parties coming around to the NDP's thinking.

The Bloc's third point is that Canada must stop the government assistance to the oil industry. The NDP has been long calling for an end to this corporate welfare, started under the Liberals and continued under the Conservatives.

Last year Imperial Oil posted the largest profits in its history, \$3 billion. Its parent company's, Exxon, was considerably larger, at \$40 billion. Even the senators in the United States could not take that and swallow it. It was too much for them. It was outlandish, in the words of the senators from the country to the south of us. They want to brag about how much of that amount was made in the oil sands, and no doubt. The tax and royalty regimes in place for the oil sands are the biggest giveaway we have seen in a long time in the oil industry. It truly is remarkable that this continues today.

With record profits like this, do the oil companies really need these tax breaks? I think Chavez proved it in Venezuela when he upped the royalties by over 30%. There was only one oil company that walked out of the country, and that was Exxon. The rest stayed and made money.

In reality, things can happen in this country, as well.

I am not sure about the last two points made by the leader of the Bloc. I feel that a territorial approach to dealing with climate change, as I pointed out, would lead to lost opportunities, duplication of efforts and an inefficient use of the limited resources of all of us in the House and across the country.

Climate change is a problem faced by all the peoples of the planet. We have to work together, collectively. While there is room for individual action, I believe much more could be achieved by working together.

On the last point made by the leader, I agree that Canada must be prepared to offer financial help, but to all jurisdictions. I am glad to see that the Bloc has accepted the amendment. I really think the provision of \$320 million to Quebec and commensurate amounts to other jurisdictions is a useful gesture at this point in time. However, the past commitment of that sum of money will not bring any of our provinces to Kyoto. That will not happen.

• (1630)

When we look at the Natural Resources Canada outlook we see that in 1990, Quebec produced 87 megatons of carbon dioxide. The projection is that by 2020 it will be at 110 megatons. That increase includes the increase in generating capacity from wind by 8%, the refurbishing of a nuclear plant, and La Romaine hydro plant would be in service by that time.

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In Quebec as well there are issues with reaching Kyoto targets. When so much of our energy is provided by hydroelectric power, then the solutions that we are looking for to reduce greenhouse gas emissions will be focused more on space heating, residential, commercial and transportation. By 2020, the Quebec energy mix will be well over 50% fossil fuels.

Those are not easy problems that can be solved overnight by an infusion of \$320 million into a provincial budget. Those are problems that are solved by long term action that plans for the energy future of this country, of North America and of the world.

Quebec's energy wealth is in hydroelectric power, one of the cleanest forms of energy available. With its vast hydroelectric potential, Quebec is well-suited to develop other forms of clean energy, such as wind or tidal power. Nothing is better than a reservoir full of water to match up to large expanses of wind farms across the very strong wind areas of the northern St. Lawrence.

It is anticipated that Quebec's demand for electricity will increase by about 10% between now and 2020. Support by hydroelectric alternative sources of energy could meet the increasing demand and provide residents of Quebec with clean and secure energy in the future. Investments in types of space heating that are above thermal energy from electricity would be very useful.

Geothermal is a natural match for Quebec. It is a natural thing to happen in that province which has such an abundance of good, clean hydroelectric power. The investment in geothermal in Quebec is a great investment and it should be made. It is an investment that has great potential for that province.

However, this is not the only energy that Quebec uses and needs. As I pointed out earlier, by 2020 over 50% of the energy in Quebec will be provided by fossil fuels. Quite clearly, in Canada we have a very secure supply of natural gas and oil. Those things are in a world of increasing turmoil and, in a world where we know that energy is an issue in almost every other place in the world, Canada can be a haven for its own citizens for those kinds of energy.

However, if that is the case, why does the Bloc support the development of liquefied natural gas entering into the Quebec market? Despite the overwhelming opposition from local residents, the Liberal government of Quebec is supporting the construction of a liquefied natural gas terminal at Lévis, across the river from Quebec City. Liquefied natural gas uses four times as much energy in its production and transportation as natural gas in a pipeline from western Canada.

Liquefied natural gas has a CO₂ profile equivalent to crude oil. It is not the product that will provide clean energy to Quebec. It is, of course, transferring that CO₂ to another country, whether it be Russia, Indonesia or Qatar, one of those countries where the greenhouse gases will be emitted into the atmosphere and add to the problem that we have globally with energy.

•(1635)

LNG creates an unacceptable safety hazard to those who live close by, including the residents of Quebec City's old town near the St. Lawrence River. They are still in the danger zone. This fact was recently supported by the area's public health officials.

As well, LNG would further increase Canada's and Quebec's energy insecurity because of where it comes from. Russia and the OPEC states have played energy politics in the past and are most likely to do it again. There is no question that the international market for LNG will grow and that the price will go up to match other mobile fuels that are available in the world, which will cause dislocation to those who invest in this type of technology.

What plan do we have for the gas that is going into Quebec now? A proponent outlines that it will increase the flow of gas from western Canada into the United States. The gas that we are now providing to Quebec will go down to the United States. When we sell more gas to the United States the proportionality clause of NAFTA comes into play and we are stuck with that. We are locked in.

Does that make sense in the world today? We know we are in a difficult situation with natural gas in Canada. We could maintain our own supply and do what we need to do for our own citizens but the exports of natural gas to the United States are beggaring our supply. We do have problems with natural gas and this type of activity in Quebec will just make them worse.

It seems unlikely to me that Quebecers are in favour of trading clean, secure, domestic sources of energy for insecure foreign sources that release huge amounts of greenhouse gases.

I must ask my colleagues from the Bloc what their is position on this. Have the Bloc members had the time to take a position on this? Do we understand all the ramifications of what is happening in Quebec, in Nova Scotia and, potentially, in British Columbia with this product? No, we do not.

If we do not have an energy strategy for this country we are putting our country at risk as it moves along. This is unacceptable in a civilized country.

Tomorrow I will be making a presentation at the hearings concerning a terminal in Quebec City. Perhaps my Bloc colleagues would like to join me and talk about the nature of energy in this country and the importance of thinking ahead about energy and planning ahead. We cannot allow the world forces to run Canada.

For too many years we have allowed a laissez-faire system when it comes to energy. Every other exporting country in the world has taken hold of its energy resources and has said that it will work for them. What are we doing in Canada? We are holding North American Energy Working Group meetings where we are not truly having a debate among Canadians about what we should do with our energy. We are listening to what the United States wants us to do with our energy to help it out.

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I think it is time we put Canada and Quebec first and it is time that we worked together to make a good future for people in Canada. It is up to us to save our grandchildren from a future where energy is coming from other countries, where we are at the vagaries of the world market and we have not put it together for ourselves. This is the time that we need to put it together for ourselves and we should.

• (1640)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Andrew Scheer): Before we move on to questions and comments, 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 Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, Canadian Heritage; the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre, Manitoba Economy.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mario Laframboise (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, when I listened to the beginning of the speech by my NDP colleague, I was finally able to understand why he is opposed to what the Government of Quebec is asking for.

The colonialist position taken by the federal government is present in all things, at all times. At the outset, he said that he did not understand why the cities of Quebec had been prevented from negotiating directly.

Municipalities are creatures of the provincial governments. The problem in Canada is that six provinces have smaller populations than the former city of Montreal, before it merged with its neighbours. Three provinces have populations smaller than the city of Laval. It is to be expected that some cities in Canada will look to the federal government for money, because the province does not have enough money to give them.

That is not our problem in Quebec. That is what we have been telling parliamentarians from the very beginning. They agree to discuss and to vote in favour of a motion saying that Quebec is a nation, but when it comes time to recognize that, by investing \$328 million, because this is the only province in Canada and the only jurisdiction in North America that can achieve the Kyoto targets, parliamentarians say no. They say what the NDP has said: this must not be done, there must be action at the national level. There will never be action at the national level. The NDP will never be in power. And when the Liberals and Conservatives are in power, they have no development plan for achieving the Kyoto targets. That is the reality.

Is it not time for the NDP to support the unanimous request by the National Assembly of Quebec, which is a Liberal government, not a PQ government, not a Bloc government, which has made a request to the federal government stating that it is time that the federal government invest \$328 million so that Quebec can achieve the Kyoto targets, a plan that has been recognized by environmentalists themselves?

We have not assessed that plan ourselves, and it is not the job of parliamentarians to assess it. Environmentalists are familiar with it and know that it is the best plan in North America. It is therefore time for the federal government to provide some return on the income taxes and the other taxes that Quebec has paid out of the \$66 billion invested in fossil fuels in the other Canadian provinces.

I think it is time for the NDP to wake up and vote for the Bloc Québécois motion.

• (1645)

[*English*]

Mr. Dennis Bevington: Mr. Speaker, I truly trust and hope Quebec is successful in achieving its plans to move ahead in making itself Kyoto compliant.

As I said in my speech, the \$320 million may be part of what needs to be done in Canada but the effort that has to go into this across this country is much larger. When I look at a commensurate amount of money that would perhaps go into my jurisdiction in the Northwest Territories, it would not be too much money. I know what the result of that kind of investment would be there. It would not be enough.

We need to mobilize vast sums of money across this country and invest it in correct fashion to achieve the results that we are looking for in Kyoto. I personally feel that there is such a good return to the economy in the end that this will work for us.

Our party supports the amendment. We are pleased the Bloc is supporting the amendment and we look forward to the vote on the motion.

Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Western Arctic for a very thorough and interesting speech. We can tell how comprehensive his background and knowledge is on this issue.

However, I must remind my colleague from Quebec, who says that Quebec is the only province that has a plan to implement Kyoto and that the NDP will never form government anyway, the NDP has formed 20 provincial governments in four provinces and one territory.

In fact, in the province of Manitoba, the NDP government has a Kyoto plan and could achieve Kyoto targets with the generous support, I would hope, of the federal government, which our motion, which we will vote on hopefully later today, does clearly state. While we support the initiatives of the province of Quebec and wish them well in their initiative, there are NDP governments in this country that are just as anxious to get going in meeting our Kyoto commitments.

One of the ways we hope to do this, with direct federal involvement, as was mentioned by my colleague, who I hope will talk more about it, is the east-west grid, building the new national dream. Just as building the railway was the national dream, we need that kind of energy and enthusiasm to tackle the greatest problem we have ever faced as a nation, climate change, by allowing the province of Manitoba and even the province of Quebec to sell their excess hydroelectricity east-west to help our neighbours, our fellow Canadians, to meet their challenges, such as those in the province of Ontario.

Why do we have coal-fired generating plants in Thunder Bay when the province of Manitoba has a ton of excess clean electricity that we can only sell to the United States? We cannot get it east-west. Would that not be a logical place for the federal government to put its energies?

Government Orders

Mr. Dennis Bevington: Mr. Speaker, people are realizing how important the idea of an east-west power grid is. It allows the country to develop a renewable energy backbone that goes right across the country. Electricity is the medium by which renewable energy in so many cases is transmitted. A natural gas pipeline is not going to be full of renewable energy. If we build an electrical grid, we can add renewable energy to it across the country.

Canada has one of the greatest wind resources in the world, but we do not have the connections that allow it to be used efficiently and effectively. That is the problem. An east-west power grid linking hydroelectric reservoirs in Manitoba, Quebec and B.C., would allow the development of an integrated renewable energy system.

It is not good enough to share with the United States. The United States is another jurisdiction. Making arrangements with the Americans so that we could use renewable energy in a correct fashion is unlikely. It is more likely within this country, among Canadians, that we can make this happen. This is the challenge ahead of us.

Manitoba Premier Gary Doer has spoken eloquently on this topic—

• (1650)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Andrew Scheer): We have a few more minutes left in questions and comments. The hon. member for Saskatoon-Humboldt.

Mr. Bradley Trost (Saskatoon—Humboldt, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I found it most interesting to listen to my hon. friend's remarks when he was talking about the NDP and about NDP governments.

I should remind the House that when Kyoto was passed the NDP Government of Saskatchewan was adamantly opposed to Kyoto. Something we do not often hear from New Democrats is that when they are in government they are very different from when they are in opposition.

When the New Democrats are in government, reality actually hits them. Reality actually bites. We saw it with Bob Rae in Ontario. When he got in, oh my goodness, he had to learn how to balance a cheque book. He tried for many years and could not do it, so now he has joined the Liberals to see if he can learn there.

If NDP governments when they are in charge provincially are opposed to Kyoto and they do not believe it can be implemented, why does the member think now, after many years of the NDP not having any practical and workable solutions, those members actually think they can pull some fairy dust out of the air and make something work when in government they cannot?

Mr. Dennis Bevington: Mr. Speaker, it goes back to the point I made in my speech. Making Kyoto happen is a national task. It is not a provincial task; it is a national and international task. I am certain that if the NDP Government of Saskatchewan had doubts about Kyoto when the Chrétien government signed it and knew that the Chrétien government at the same time had a laissez faire attitude toward the development of fossil fuels across the country, it must have known that it was unlikely to happen. The NDP government's opposition to it may have been simply that it realized there were no mechanisms in place, there was no opportunity and nothing there that could make Kyoto happen at the time.

Here we are sitting in Parliament in 2007. There are four parties that say they want to move toward Kyoto. There is a committee working on that and we have the opportunity actually to do something for Canadians. Let us put the history behind us and get on with the job that we have in this Parliament today.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Steven Blaney (Lévis—Bellechasse, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House this afternoon to take part in debate on an issue that is of the greatest concern to the government and which also is of concern to Canadians, Quebeckers and the residents of my riding, Lévis—Bellechasse, who hope one day to be leaders in field of sustainable development in this country.

Since yesterday, we are further along that road, thanks to our government's initiative to support dairy production on the family farm. Given our defence of supply management, this is a way of encouraging sustainable development. It is also a way of saying to Quebeckers that the Conservative members they elected have come here to work at making Quebec and Canada a better country.

Today, there has been a lot of talk but no action. Fortunately, our government is doing something. That is why, this afternoon, I am pleased to talk about an initiative of our government to improve environmental conditions in our country through concrete actions in which all Canadians can participate. I am speaking of the ecoenergy technology initiative.

Previous governments greatly reduced transfer payments to the provinces. We have made a commitment to correct the fiscal imbalance. Our government gives the provinces the means to carry out their plans and to act within their fields of jurisdiction. Since the environment is an area of shared jurisdiction, correcting the fiscal imbalance will give Quebec the means of meeting its commitments. We have some work to do at the federal level. That is why we are here.

Improving and protecting the quality of the air we breathe is a priority for the government. It is very clear. In our country, energy production and consumption are major sources of air pollution and account for 82% of greenhouse gas emissions. It is important, therefore, that Canada's strategy for improving air quality and the environment include measures dealing with energy.

Our government is determined to bring about major changes in the modes of energy production and consumption. To achieve that, we are addressing three components: research and development directed at making conventional energy cleaner, increased use of renewable, clean energy, and energy efficiency. The objective is to move from our dependence on non-renewable hydrocarbons to renewable energy sources.

That is what this is all about: global action to which nearly \$2 billion was committed. This is not a hastily put together announcement; this is something that was announced in the Speech from the Throne, for example, and in the budget brought down a year ago. It is now taking shape and becoming available to individuals who want to take concrete action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and their own energy consumption.

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Greenhouse gas emissions can best be reduced not simply by moving from hydrocarbon energies to renewable energies, but also by reducing our energy consumption. The idea is to aim for negawatts. That is the direction we want to encourage Canadian taxpayers to take with the ecoenergy initiative.

The environment is the responsibility not only of the Department of the Environment, but of all departments. As the Minister of Natural Resources likes to say, among the largest untapped sources of energy is the energy that we waste.

There are 13 millions houses and 380,000 buildings in Canada. These use 30% of our energy and generate nearly 30% of our greenhouse gases. This means that by using new energy-efficient building technologies developed here or abroad, we could dramatically reduce emissions and at the same time save building owners a great deal of money.

Before going any further, I would like to say that I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Saskatoon—Wanuskewin.

The government announced a \$300 million investment in the ecoenergy efficiency initiative designed to increase the number of energy-efficient homes and buildings in Canada and to help businesses and industries use energy more wisely.

This initiative provides for financial incentives for projects requiring support, such as retrofits by homeowners, small businesses or industries.

The ecoenergy efficiency initiative has three components, because ecoenergy takes a much more global approach.

• (1655)

One of these components is the ecoenergy retrofit program, which will provide financial assistance to encourage the renovation of houses, small buildings and industrial equipment. This is direct assistance, concrete and tangible, a form of green taxation actually, which enables Canadian taxpayers who adopt environmentally sound behaviours to reduce their energy consumption while saving money. As the government, we encourage them to do so because this is a societal choice.

Another component is ecoenergy for buildings and homes, which will support the construction of new energy efficient buildings and houses, and the renovation of buildings and houses. Under this initiative, the government will work with the provinces and the territories on developing building codes inspired by best practices in construction and energy efficiency.

In 1976, when my parents built their home, two-by-fours were used to build houses. In 1993, when I became a homeowner, they were using two-by-sixes. The houses were insulated better and the electricity bill was lower.

Finally, ecoenergy for industry will stimulate investment aimed at saving energy in Canada's industrial sector. This component will promote the exchange of information on best practices, ensure the training of energy managers and provide industries with better access to the latest energy efficient technologies and practices.

I would like to talk about the ecoenergy retrofit program because it directly affects taxpayers and it concerns most homeowners, whether small commercial, institutional or industrial properties.

As part of this initiative, our government would offer financial incentives to nearly 140,000 owners for improvements that will enable them to reduce their energy consumption and costs. It is expected that the average subsidy will be worth \$1,000 or maybe more depending on the number of improvements made. Clearly it is worthwhile adjusting to climate change.

Participating homeowners will receive a personalized checklist indicating the best renovations to make to their home. They will also be informed of the financial assistance they are entitled to for every improvement.

The checklist will be created when the assessment is carried out by an energy specialist. Afterwards another assessment will check whether all the work has been done properly. The cost of both assessments will be charged to the owners.

Financial support will be established according to the efficiency of each improvement to reduce energy consumption. For example, the replacement of an old gas furnace with an Energy Star approved high efficiency model will result in a saving of some 20% on a heating bill and could therefore be eligible for substantial financial support. Insulating an unfinished basement, also eligible, and replacing windows are things that will allow us to improve the energy efficiency of Canada's building inventory.

Once the improvements suggested on the energy checklist are complete, each house's energy performance will be verified for a reduction of some 30%. This approach will mean a reduction on average of nearly four tonnes of greenhouse gases annually.

That was the residential component. There is also an ecoenergy retrofit component for some 800 small businesses, industrial facilities and organizations, to enable them to implement ecoenergy measures. Factories, community buildings, stores, offices and educational facilities will be eligible for financial assistance. The eligibility criteria will be established in consultation with target groups and potential partners such as provinces, territories and utilities.

In Quebec, Hydro-Québec had a pollution control initiative in which I was involved, which enabled a number of municipalities to reduce their energy bill.

Retrofit projects will involve, among other things, improvements to equipment or building envelopes leading to a savings in energy. The initiative will focus on such areas as improvements to heating and air conditioning systems, to lighting, to motors and to industrial processes. Financial incentives will be evaluated according to the savings established by an operations audit. Projects may be submitted to an audit by a third party, to confirm the actual completion of the improvements.

The total savings of ecoenergy retrofit program, including home and small organization renovations, would be enough to heat all the houses in a city the size of Windsor, Ontario, for a full year.

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• (1700)

There are specific measures: \$1,000 per household to retrofit a house and improve the efficiency of our building inventory. It is the ecoenergy initiative and it is in our jurisdiction. In addition to tidying up our own backyard by recognizing the fiscal imbalance, we are providing the means, as is Quebec, to ensure effective measures and a plan on climate change. They will help to make our country, Canada, a world leader in the fight against climate change.

Mr. Thierry St-Cyr (Jeanne-Le Ber, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I was pleased to hear my colleague from Lévis—Bellechasse talk at length about a former Liberal program that the Conservative government first abolished then restored. If the environment situation were not as serious as it is, if the government's inaction were not such a major concern, it would be almost funny to hear him announce and explain once again a program that existed before the Conservatives abolished it.

Surprisingly, what he said has very little to do with the motion before us today and which asks to provide the Government of Quebec with the sum of \$328 million to enable it to implement its plan, something all stakeholders in Quebec are asking for unanimously. It is not only the Bloc Québécois that is asking for it, it is not only some mean separatists who are asking for it. Of course, the Bloc Québécois and the Parti Québécois are asking for it, but so are the ADQ and the Liberal Party of Jean Charest, which cannot be accused of plotting against Canada.

My colleague from Quebec did not say in his speech whether he would vote in favour of the Bloc Québécois motion, so I ask him. Will he vote, yes or no, in favour of the Bloc Québécois motion? If the answer is no, can he explain to this House what he represents: the interests of Quebecers or the interests of oil companies in western Canada?

• (1705)

Mr. Steven Blaney: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Jeanne-Le Ber for his pleasant question. I always find it amusing when I hear members of the Bloc Québécois talk about provincial jurisdictions whenever they feel like it.

I would like to remind my colleague that the environmental issue should really be above all partisanship and that the Bloc Québécois is asked to pass a bill on climate change and clean air here, in this House. The members of Parliament were elected to represent the citizens of Quebec who want actions regarding the environment. I also remind my colleague that his own colleagues sitting on the committee are obstructing our bills.

What is the Bloc Québécois waiting for? Why is it not agreeing to a bill on climate change and clean air since this is exactly what the country needs, according to the leader of the Parti Québécois?

Lastly, I would like to remind him also that we live in a large country, which extends all the way to Vancouver. We should stop taking shots at one another and we should take up the challenge together, not only for the future of the country, but also for the future of our children. We should work together because this is what our fellow citizens expect. Canadians want us to move things forward on one of the most important issues of our generation, the environmental issue.

Therefore, I reach out to my colleague across the way. I invite him to work with us in passing the legislation on climate change and clean air.

[*English*]

Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in that same spirit of cooperation expressed by my colleague, I will say that I agree with much of the tone and the content of his remarks, even if it did not directly answer the opposition day question specifically.

I agree with him that we have an opportunity to become the world centre of excellence in demand side management in energy conservation. Even in our harsh northern climate, we can show the world how to do more with less and perhaps that will be our most valuable export: the technology associated with the demand side management of our precious energy resources.

I do not see evidence that the government has embraced that notion, other than the programs that my colleague mentioned, a small housing retrofit program. As a demonstration project, could the Government of Canada not do a comprehensive energy retrofit on the 68,000 buildings that it itself owns and operates to show the world how it can be done, and to show the private sector how we can save as much as 40% in our energy costs and greenhouse emissions by energy retrofitting comprehensively those buildings that are under the direct control of the federal government?

[*Translation*]

The Speaker: The hon. member for Lévis—Bellechasse must give a short answer to the question.

Mr. Steven Blaney: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

I would simply remind him that Public Works Canada is a leader in the field of sustainable development, particularly as it pertains to green buildings.

I agree with him: the federal government must be a leader and show the way. For that matter, many Public Works buildings stand out due to the adoption of energy efficiency measures. Having been myself an employee of Public Works Canada, I know that that department has taken recycling measures in its buildings.

[*English*]

Mr. Maurice Vellacott (Saskatoon—Wanuskewin, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to take part in this debate today. There is no doubt in my mind and in the minds of most Canadians that there is a big issue before us on the environment.

Our Conservative government clearly understands that global warming is a serious threat to the health and well-being of Canadians. They want clean water and air, and most of all they want action. They do not want just empty words that they have heard for so very long on the climate file. There is really no doubt about that fact.

The government is taking some concrete action that was already promised during our campaign last fall and in the first part of this year. We have actually followed through on some of those things already. We are moving forward with some pretty concrete and specific results.

Private Members' Business

The most obvious example of late of course is Bill C-30 which is the clean air act, which is now before a legislative committee of the House. That legislation lays out a very solid and workable plan. It makes a fundamental change in the approach of the federal government with respect to air pollution, and also greenhouse gases, a change which is vital and crucial to the health of Canadians.

We can compare that of course to the record of the previous Liberal government as it stalled on the environment over some 13 years actually. For many of those years I was there and served as a member when the stalling occurred. The Liberals racked up a lot of rhetoric, a lot of verbal diarrhea, as some would say over that time, and stalled due to a lack of realistic goals.

The previous Liberal government stalled because a timid government was unwilling to step up and accept its responsibility in concrete terms for fear of giving offence to others. It stalled as well because of the clear failure to accept that simple truth that Canadians already know. Canadians cannot be healthy without clean air.

The Liberal regime may not have been willing to act, but the Conservative government certainly is and is committed to do that in very practical and concrete ways. The government respects the objectives and principles of the Kyoto protocol. We are committed to making some real progress toward achieving those objectives.

However, we do face a challenge and I think we need to be honest to admit that, a challenge made greater by the inaction of the previous Liberal government as it failed to set up and then to follow up with clear priorities for greenhouse gases and air pollution reductions.

The path toward a new and a more realistic approach requires an approach that we have started through, in fact, the clean air act. It requires an approach based on targets that will mean immediate and also long term health benefits for all Canadians.

It is important to understand that the government is looking at clean air in a comprehensive way. We believe that we can ensure that Canadians receive health benefits from cleaner air now and we can take actions that will address also the longer term issues of climate change.

I want to comment a bit on the health considerations of our actions because this is where it really gets down to each one of us. The health of Canadians has been the focus of the government since the very beginning. Beyond the legitimate focus of our government, our partners and Canadians on health care, we understand the need to be concerned about the many determinants of an individual's health, such as genetics and behaviour. Air quality is also a big part of that.

For decades scientists have assembled and gathered evidence together on the health effects of air pollution, not just the killer smogs off in London and Los Angeles in the past but right now in our major cities across Canada as well. They know that air pollution causes premature mortality, hospital visits, lung cancer, and cardiac and respiratory illnesses. They know that air pollution results in increased absenteeism from school and work. Outdoor air pollution in Canadian cities also contributes to some 5,900 deaths per year from stroke, cardiac and lung disease. That impact is not evenly distributed throughout our society among Canadians but rather, air

pollution has its greatest impact on children, the elderly and also the very frail.

In fact, in Toronto during the summer, smog is a factor in 35% of acute respiratory hospital admissions in children under the age of two. Individuals with diabetes, asthma, emphysema, heart disease, and circulatory disease are at greater risk on days when air pollution is high.

● (1710)

Those statistics have more than personal impacts. They have impacts on our health care system and our economy. In fact, in Ontario alone the costs of lost productivity due to air pollution are estimated to be some billion dollars per year.

I think Canadians understand this. In fact, more than half of Canadians believe that air pollution will eventually have a negative impact on their very own health. A full third of Canadians believe that air pollution has already had some kind of an impact upon them.

The Conservative Party believes that these Canadians are right. We believe the scientists are right. The government introduced Bill C-30 to address these concerns. That is why the government is charting a new and dynamic path.

The government introduced Bill C-30 to kick-start effective action that was so lacking until now. On this issue, as on so many others, we know that effective action is possible if there is a will. We know that taking—

● (1715)

The Speaker: Order, please. I am reluctant to interrupt the hon. member, but it being 5:15 p.m. pursuant to order made earlier this day, all questions necessary to dispose of the opposition motion are deemed put and a recorded division is deemed requested and deferred until Tuesday, February 13, 2007 at the expiry of the time provided for government orders.

Accordingly, I am afraid that the hon. member and his speech are cut off at this point.

Mr. Ed Komarnicki: Mr. Speaker, if you were to seek it, you would find that there is unanimous consent to see the clock as 5:30 p.m.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Speaker: It being 5:30 p.m. the House will now proceed to the consideration of private member's business as listed on today's order paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*Translation*]

TEXTILE INDUSTRY

Mr. Paul Crête (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, BQ) moved:

Private Members' Business

That, in the opinion of the House, the government should act on the motion proposing to help the textile and clothing industries adopted in the House on October 5, 2005, and worded as follows: "That, in the opinion of the House, the government should establish, in compliance with international agreements, a policy of assistance to the textile and clothing industries in order to enable the industries to compete throughout the world, particularly by allowing clothing made with Canadian textiles but manufactured abroad to be imported without customs duties and by creating an income support program for older workers."

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to speak to the motion that I proposed. I want to deal with the form first. The motion says that the government should act on the motion adopted on October 5, 2005.

One and a half year after this House adopted a motion asking the government to establish policies and programs to help the textile and clothing industries, the government still has not taken any action. We are not talking about subsidies, but about concrete measures proposed by stakeholders from both sectors. This inaction has terrible consequences.

For example, *The Metropolitan Economy*, the economic bulletin published by Montreal's economic community, includes the following, in its edition on the first quarter of 2006:

Continuing Decline in Clothing. Employment has been shrinking for six years now in textiles and clothing. From 62,000 jobs in 1999, it fell to only 28,000 by the first quarter of 2006.

Montréal clothing producers continue to lose ground on the Canadian market, and have also been slipping on the U.S. market since 2002. They have also had to cope with the complete elimination of international quotas since January 2005.

The elimination of these quotas affects Montréal producers not only on the domestic market, but also on the U.S. market, where they had made gains in the 1990s. In the first quarter, Canadian clothing imports were up by 5% year to year. Clothing exports plunged by 18% and textile exports by 23%. The most drastic impact is on foreign markets.

Those are the numbers. Let us now look at the reality.

In the last year, the Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology has looked at the entire manufacturing sector. During the research, we visited many different locations. We went to Montreal to visit a company called Samuelsohn, which makes business suits of a very high quality using Canadian fabrics. These people use a special technique to create high-end clothing. A company called Peerless also makes business suits and is a very important manufacturer. These two companies have to compete with China regarding the products that can be submitted. This results in massive job loss.

For example, Quebec has been hit harder than Canada by the loss of jobs in the apparel sector—which includes knitting plants as well as plants manufacturing apparel and accessories. Forty per cent of all jobs have been lost. This industry now has only 36,000 employees, compared to 60,000 in 2000 and 98,000 in 1988.

The textile industry includes on one side the spinning, weaving and finishing operations and, on the textile product side, all the processing plants. In Canada, the number of employees went from 50,000 in 2000 to 41,000 in 2005, an 18% drop.

In Quebec, the industry now employs 20,000 people, compared to 24,000 in 2000 and 36,000 in 1988.

However, the decline of those industries is not inevitable. The Liberal government, which preceded this Conservative government, dithered for years before taking appropriate measures. It is truly

responsible for the current situation. We have a highly skilled workforce. I have seen it at Peerless and Samuelsohn. These people are highly qualified and they earn low wages despite their heavy workload.

As members of Parliament, we work hard, but if we were in the shoes of the people who knit and work in the clothing and textile industries, at the end of the day, we would be very tired. These people deserve our support. They deserve a chance to improve their lot and make it through. It is possible.

Indeed, both industries have made suggestions that the Bloc Québécois retained in the proposal that it put forward. We did not list them all in the motion. For example, we are talking about allowing clothing made offshore with Canadian textiles to enter duty free. In other words, when the threads are made here and the piece of clothing is made abroad then comes back to Canada without competing with clothing made here, we would like it to be duty free.

Right now, it is crazy. The threads and the fabrics that are used come from Canada. We have the clothing finished in other countries and, when it comes back to Canada, we have to pay customs duties. Yet, if it comes from very poor countries, from developing countries, and it is made from fabrics from India or Bangladesh, for example, there would not be any tariff on its arrival here. It is completely absurd. It is a perverse effect of the initiative that was taken to help the poorest countries.

● (1720)

This problem has needed fixing for a long time now, but we keep coming up against officials at the Department of Finance. We have not managed to budge them yet, but we hope we will soon.

The textile and clothing industry is not doomed. We can make things happen; we can propose measures. For example, the Bloc Québécois' strategy proposes implementing measures to encourage the use of textiles made in Quebec and Canada, such as the one I mentioned earlier: duty-free importation of clothing manufactured abroad. We could also impose stricter country of origin rules on developing countries. We think we are helping developing countries, but we are not. In the end, we are only hurting our local industries. We could negotiate to include Canada in agreements signed between the United States and Latin American countries. The Americans did not hesitate to sign bilateral agreements, such as the one with Caribbean countries.

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The American market used to be a major outlet for Canadian textiles. We sold our textiles to the Americans and they made them into clothes. The Americans signed bilateral agreements with Caribbean countries. Now, clothing is manufactured there from American textiles. Then the clothing goes back to the United States duty-free. In Canada, we have to pay duties. We can no longer sell our textiles to clothing manufacturers. For clothing made in Caribbean countries to re-enter the United States duty-free, it has to be made from American textiles. We should fight fire with fire. Let us stop being boy scouts and start giving our industries a chance.

Furthermore, we should have a local purchasing policy wherever international agreements allow it. That would help. All we have to do is create awareness. When I became a member of Parliament, I did not check every piece of clothing I wore to see if it was made in Quebec or Canada. Now that I know the impact it has on employment, I do check. Every time I buy a suit, a shirt or any other item of clothing or cloth, I think about this issue so we can get results in the end.

We also have to help workers from companies that close down by giving them additional training. The Bloc Québécois fought to obtain a program for older worker adjustment. Finally, the new Minister of Human Resources and Social Development has agreed, for the first time, to assess the implementation of passive measures. What is a passive measure? It is an income that ensures income security for a family or individual until their old age pension kicks in because he or she tried everything to find a job and did not succeed. What is sad is that the government continues to wait and let things drag on. There will be nothing new in the next budget. In that regard, I think the Conservatives are doing even worse than the Liberals. The program for older worker adjustment is very important.

In the clothing sector, a sector in which people are older on average, nearly 45% of the workers were over 45 in 2005. There is a need. When a person has worked 25, 30 or 35 years in the textile industry, they do not become a computer technician overnight. It is not easy for them to just go work in another sector. They need opportunities. People want to work, but they do not necessarily get the training they need. They need to be given a chance because often these are people who came from somewhere else in the world. They are providing for their family here in Canada and they are also helping family members who still live in their home country. All they are getting in return for dedicating their life to a company and working for a very small salary is to end up on welfare because there is no program to help them. And our society produces wealth. There is a problem with the distribution of wealth and the government has to be aware of this issue.

Furthermore, we should also use safeguards in new trade agreements. What are safeguards? That is what the U.S. and Europe use in dealing with Chinese textiles.

Textiles from China arrived in huge quantities. In 2005, a rule included in international agreements came into effect. That rule allowed the Americans and the Europeans to control those imports and to limit the quantities during a three year period. The limits on textile imports were so radical that the Chinese agreed to negotiate the percentage increase, which allowed for a softer transition. Here, in Canada, that rule has not been used. The free market principle

applies. We act a bit like boy scouts, believing that our complacency will give results. We have not seen any results yet.

● (1725)

Jobs are disappearing regularly. That was mentioned in the statistics on Montreal and it is the same thing in the regions. In my riding and in Montmagny, textile companies like Consoltex, closed their doors. Other businesses also disappeared during that period and the statistics for Montreal could be applied to the rest of Quebec. The number of jobs fell from 62,000 in 1999 to only 28,000 in the first quarter of 2006. That is an unacceptable disaster to which the successive governments should have reacted and that they could have alleviated with corrective measures.

We see an unacceptable laissez-faire. According to the protocol for the accession of China to the WTO, we could impose quotas on Chinese imports, for example. In fact, when China became a member of the WTO, it was accepted that countries could limit the increase of Chinese imports by setting temporary quotas to avoid mass closures of industries due to the arrival of that industrial giant.

As I said, the United States and Europe did it. Here, we did nothing. We could also adopt an international policy that could prevent offshoring. Minimum internationally accepted standards applicable to workers rights and environment protection must be included in trade agreements.

The same thing happened during the industrial revolution at the end of the 19th century. Children were working in factories and people were saying that they could not do without them. It was the same thing in the days of the slave trade. People were saying that they could not do without the slaves. Today, we are saying that people are working for 25¢ an hour and that this is the way things are. In practice, the whole world will have to ensure that every worker's rights to minimum conditions are protected. We are currently penalizing our own workers who have significant expertise and, what is more important, we are not giving them a chance to participate in the increase in wealth that is generated by globalization. If globalization really existed, the regulations on the environment and the protection of working conditions would be standardized, and there would be a better distribution of wealth.

When millions of dollars are earned from the sale of aircraft or other products to other countries, some people are raking in profits. They can do it because the markets have been opened. Globalization has created victims. Our system cannot be judged only on the way it creates wealth. Right now, Canada and Quebec do not get a passing grade in the textile and apparel sector because the government has not implemented the proper programs.

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The capper is that there used to be a program called CANTex that helped companies modernize. The Conservatives announced the good news that they were getting rid of this program as part of a series of cuts where, without giving much thought to what they were doing, they axed the court challenges program, which enabled organizations and people with limited financial resources to challenge improper court decisions. The government also cut funding for literacy programs. This is interesting. At a time when jobs are being cut in the textile and clothing industry and people are being advised to go to school and get training, literacy funding is being slashed. The government also eliminated the joint federal-provincial literacy initiatives program, which provided funding for developing original tools.

In Montmagny, for example, a major company, Whirlpool, cut 500 jobs. Only 200 to 250 of the 500 people who lost their jobs found new work. Some needed literacy services, and tools were developed for them. Now these programs are being cut. People cannot necessarily be trained in the same way at 15, 20, 45 and 55. The government does not seem to understand this.

Today, there are labour shortages in some sectors. If the government had kept on investing appropriately in literacy, people could fill those vacancies today. But they cannot, because the government hid behind the wave of neo-liberalism and told itself that the market would take care of everything. Well, the market cannot take care of everything. People deserve help. Some industries are growth sectors.

Today, the people who study textile are in touch with reality. They have modern plans and are willing to develop the industry. The same is true of the clothing industry. We have quality designers and a skilled workforce. The government's inaction angers these two sectors, which feel that the government has sacrificed them to the global market.

• (1730)

We do not accept it. That is what the Bloc Québécois defends. I wish that, after adopting the motion of October 5, 2005, this House would have had the decency to adopt it again this year and to press the government so that, finally, we would have appropriate programs. In fact, there are still thousands of workers in that sector who deserve to be helped, not with subsidies, but with innovative programs encouraging the industries to perform and deliver results. That is what we expect from the government.

[English]

Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I share the outrage of my colleague from the Bloc Québécois. For 10 years or more, the NDP has raised the issue of garment workers and the garment industry and how successive federal governments have abandoned this industry sector.

There is a clear simple thing that the current federal government could do that would be of great benefit to the Canadian garment industry. It has to do, as my colleague raised, with the WTO and the safeguards put in place.

When China entered the WTO, it contemplated the impact that this surge of Chinese garments coming into Canada, without any tariff or duty, would have on the domestic industry. Other

governments like the United States, the European Union, Mexico, Turkey, Argentina and other countries around the world took advantage of the available safeguards and limited the increase of the Chinese imports to 7.5% per year. Our Canadian government, in some zeal to be free traders, allowed 200% and 300% per year increases. Some sectors were flooded with specific garments such as ladies pants. It was as much as a 385% increase.

This devastated, undermined and almost crippled the industry in my home town of Winnipeg, in which I have 43 garment manufacturers. At least the last time I checked, I had 43 garment manufacturers. By the end of today, we have probably lost two or three more. They are dropping like flies because of the negligence of successive federal governments, which refused to take advantage of even those protective measures that were available to them.

Could my colleague give us any indication what possible reason the government could have for not implementing the safeguards available to us under the WTO? What is the rationale?

• (1735)

[Translation]

Mr. Paul Crête: Mr. Speaker, my colleague raised an interesting point.

The Americans and the Europeans have used these measures. Why not Canada? It is because in the United States and in Europe, they did not give China the status of a market economy. They thought China did not meet the necessary criteria to be recognized as a market economy. Consequently, they are able to use safeguards.

We, on the other hand, have behaved like boy scouts. We have decided to give that status without demanding anything in return. When we could have used the safeguards, we turned a blind eye. We have seen it, for example, with bicycles. There is a bicycle manufacturing plant in the Minister of Industry's riding. In his first months in this House, he chose not to appeal even though the Canadian International Trade Tribunal was allowing it. To say "as far as we are concerned, the market forces rule" is clearly a neo-liberal approach.

The same philosophy applies when we award a \$3.4 billion contract to Boeing without any requirement as to how this money will be distributed. We could have checked to see what the currently distribution looks like. This government has shown a lack of will to help the industrial sectors. However, there is some hope.

The Standing Committee on Industry has produced a unanimous report regarding the textile and apparel sector and all the other manufacturing sectors. This report has been welcomed by the Manufacturers and Exporters Association as a breath of fresh air.

We now hope that the federal government will apply the committee's 22 recommendations to its budget and other measures in the coming months, so that accelerated depreciation, for example, can actually become an interesting option for installing new equipment and making sure that the workforce is available.

In the end, I believe that this all boils down to the fact that we must show respect for the citizens and for the people who work long hours in these sectors and who have become specialized, so that each and everyone of us, as citizens of Quebec and of Canada, can become mindful consumers.

A lady from Quebec named Laure Waridel wrote an extraordinary book titled *Acheter, c'est voter* or "to buy is to vote". In this book, the author explains that if we choose carefully when we buy and if we encourage local production of good quality, we can have an influence on the market.

However, that will not be enough if the governments do not step in to provide the necessary development tools so that our manufacturing sector can move forward.

Let me conclude by saying that we must think very carefully before lowering the GST by another 1%. There could be increased consumption of products that, many times, come from somewhere else. Personally, if the choice were mine, I would change the tax structure in order to protect our manufacturing sector and create higher incomes and more permanent jobs. That is how we could turn the tide.

[English]

Mrs. Betty Hinton (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to participate in today's debate on Motion No. 158, and specifically, speak to the challenges and opportunities facing older workers in Canada. I underscore two key words from that preceding statement: challenges and opportunities.

With the inevitable passage of time, we are faced or challenged with a natural transformation, physically, mentally and emotionally, that will alter, to one degree or another, oneself. As the Swiss philosopher Henri-Frédéric Amiel once wrote:

To know how to grow old is the masterwork of wisdom, and one of the most difficult chapters in the great art of living.

This difficult chapter of life, already brimming with challenges, can be compounded with additional anxieties related to an unanticipated change in one's professional life. Such has been the lamentable case for many working Canadians in the forestry, apparel and textile industries facing sudden layoffs, with industries themselves undergoing difficult transformations.

Regardless of what the Bloc would have us believe, I wish to assure Canadians that the Conservative government recognizes the challenges confronting older workers. Moreover, we also realize that such challenges also present opportunities.

As Canada's labour shortage becomes more pronounced, we must seize on this moment to ensure older workers have ample opportunity to contribute their immense knowledge and skills to our national workforce. As Judy Cutler, of Canada's Association for the Fifty-Plus, so succinctly put it:

There's a shortage of workers, and as more and more people retire, there will be a greater shortage....We have older workers who want to work. Why not embrace their expertise?

Why not, indeed?

Private Members' Business

I am proud to report that Canada's new government has taken tangible action in pursuit of this objective. For instance, last fall we announced a \$70 million targeted initiative for older workers. Working with our provincial and territorial partners, we will help ensure older workers between the ages of 55 and 64 in vulnerable communities, such as those affected by transformations in the forestry, textile and apparel industries, remain active participants in the labour force.

Furthermore, participating provinces and territories will have significant latitude in identifying such communities and in the design and delivery of the projects. Support will particularly assist those workers who have exhausted their EI benefits and may require further assistance to stay active in the workforce.

For the interest of the member opposite, the province of Quebec has already signed on to this initiative and will receive \$19 million in federal funding for older workers, \$19 million more than the Bloc Québécois has ever managed to deliver for older workers.

Canada's new government is not content to end there. Building on our budget 2006 commitment, we have recently announced the appointment of an expert panel to study the labour market conditions affecting older workers. The panel, which eminent membership includes Ms. Diane Bellemare, the senior vice-president and chief economist of the Conseil du patronat du Québec, has a mandate to look at a range of potential measures to help older workers, such as improved training and enhanced income support such as early retirement benefits.

Additionally, the panel will engage in extensive consultations with provincial and territorial governments as well as with employers, labour representatives, academics and other stakeholders.

Unlike the Bloc, many Canadians have acknowledged that the striking of this panel is a positive and important step as we seek to address the issues facing older workers. Gabriel Bouchard of the Montreal-based Monster Canada, a leading human resources agency, has remarked that this very positive move by the government is:

—a much needed step in the right direction...Many Canadian businesses are already feeling the dramatic impact of our shrinking labour pool and it is crucial that we look for answers now, including new ways to capitalize on the excellent experience and qualifications that older workers bring to organizations...

These two important measures undertaken by Canada's new government in just the past year alone underline our commitment and, more fundamental, our belief that older workers still have the ability to make vital contributions to our labour force.

● (1740)

Let us contrast that with the Bloc's pessimistic assessment of older workers. For example, let us listen to the words the Bloc member for Drummond uttered when assessing an older worker's ability to perhaps learn a new skill. She said:

Let us be logical: that is impossible at 58. What is more, employers are hesitant to hire older workers, and the only way they can manage is to go on welfare.

Private Members' Business

I am proud to state that our Conservative government rejects such an assessment and instead has chosen to work with our provincial and territorial counterparts to advance solutions promoting the continued labour force involvement of older workers, especially those in the forestry, textile and apparel industries.

I would also like to highlight for the House other federal support measures provided, although indirectly, to older workers.

Chief among them is the employment insurance program. The first line of assistance for eligible unemployed Canadians, EI provides eligible older workers active re-employment benefits and measures to help them find and regain employment.

In 2004-05, unemployed Canadians aged 55 and over received nearly \$1.4 billion in benefits. An additional 80,000 workers aged 50 or older also participated in retraining programs that helped them prepare for new employment under EI part II programming.

With reference to Quebec, the Government of Canada transfers nearly \$600 million in EI funding to the province, under the labour market development agreement, for employment programming geared to eligible unemployed workers. Under this agreement, Quebec has the latitude to design and deliver initiatives that respond to eligible unemployed workers' needs.

While Canada's new government is actively pursuing measures to ensure the continued engagement of older workers, we are cognizant of the increasingly crucial need to build a larger transformative framework that will produce the best educated, most skilled and most flexible workforce to compete in the global marketplace.

This past November, the finance minister unveiled an ambitious and long term economic road map entitled Advantage Canada. One component of that road map was the plan to build a knowledge advantage.

What do we mean by a knowledge advantage? First, it is about quantity: increasing the participation of all Canadians in the workforce to meet future labour needs. Second, it is about quality: enhancing the quality of education and skills in Canada. Finally, it is about efficiency: facilitating worker mobility and giving Canadians the information they need to make informed labour market choices.

Canada's new government has made a pledge to make significant and sustained progress on each of these fronts.

On quantity, we are taking steps to encourage the increased participation of Canadians in the labour force. We have improved the foreign workers program service delivery. We are working toward the creation of a Canadian agency on foreign credentials to allow more new Canadians an opportunity to fully contribute their skills. We are also striving to eliminate the barriers preventing under-represented groups, such as Canadians with disabilities and aboriginals, from greater participation.

On quality, we are utilizing a multi-faceted approach to foster an improved environment of learning for Canadians. We are working to provide stable and predictable federal funding to the provinces and territories to ensure the quality of the post-secondary education system. Furthermore, to encourage the skilled trades, Canada's new government introduced apprenticeship and tools tax incentives in budget 2006.

On efficiency, we are following through to ensure Canada has the most efficient and effective labour market possible to succeed in the highly competitive global economy. We firmly believe that workers, older and otherwise, must have the option to pursue opportunities and practice their occupations wherever and whenever they choose, free of interprovincial barriers. Similarly, Canadians also need relevant and accessible labour market information in order to know what job opportunities are available, what skills are likely to be in demand, and where those jobs will be.

Not surprisingly, Advantage Canada, especially the knowledge advantage component, was well received. The Canadian Chamber of Commerce's Nancy Hughes Anthony called it a "great road map", saying that "it's got all the elements of things we need to do". The Canadian Council on Learning stated that the measures supporting post-secondary education are "welcome and positive initiatives".

• (1745)

Clearly, despite the Bloc's empty rhetoric, Canada's new government is already building the foundations for a strengthened workforce, one in which older workers will form an integral element.

Mr. Mario Silva (Davenport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to rise in this House for the first time as the official opposition critic for labour. I look forward to working with members of all parties to ensure that Canada's labour market continues to grow in fairness and prosperity.

In that vein, I am pleased to have this opportunity to speak on the motion put forward in relation to the protection of Canada's textile and clothing industries.

The textile and clothing industry is clearly in need of support. This motion helps to demonstrate that we in this House recognize this reality.

If we were to look back only 20 years ago, we would see that approximately 70% of the textile and clothing products consumed in this country were actually made in Canada.

However, by 2004, as reported by Statistics Canada, imported goods had come to supply the Canadian market with over 60% of the textiles and clothing consumed in this country. That is an astonishing shift in the marketplace and is a resounding call for action from the Government of Canada.

This is an important sector for Canada and for the major urban centres across the country that have textile and clothing industries as an integral part of their local economies. For example, in my city of Toronto, there are over 550 apparel manufacturers operating and they account for nearly \$1.4 billion in wholesale shipments. This represents 16% of the domestic market in this country.

Perhaps more important than the dollar figures are the numbers of people in the city of Toronto who work in the textile and clothing sector. An estimated 50,000 people work in this sector, with more than half of them employed in the manufacturing side of this equation. These jobs include cutters, sewers, pressers, art directors and so forth. These are jobs that we need in Toronto and in cities across the country. They are jobs that need to be protected.

• (1750)

[*Translation*]

The Montreal textile and clothing sector is a very important player in the region's economy and is recognized internationally as a major pole of this sector of activity.

The reality, as already mentioned by many members, is that the international business environment has changed considerably over the years.

[*English*]

Beginning in the early 1970s and continuing until the middle of the 1990s, the trade in textiles and clothing was quite closely regulated via a system of import quotas put in place by major importers and exporters of these materials.

Countries such as China and India were the subject of agreements with Canada, and these quotas, known as the multi-fibre arrangement, continued until the member countries of the World Trade Organization voted to remove all these quotas at the Uruguay round of negotiations. This was to be undertaken in four separate stages from 1995 through 2005.

We must add to this the reality of the 1989 free trade agreement with the United States, which saw the importation of American products grow very rapidly. This continued until 1999, when there was a shift toward the importation of goods from China and, to a lesser extent, India.

This shift was a direct result of the removal of quotas on goods originating outside of Canada. Consequently, there was of course a significant impact upon Canada's textile and clothing industry and upon the companies that manufactured them, as well as the employees who worked for them.

In terms of numbers, the growth from China is quite dramatic. In the textile sector, China was exporting to Canada \$800 million in goods by the year 2004. The clothing sector is even more dramatic, with China's share of the Canadian market moving from \$571 million in 1992 to \$2.3 billion in the year 2004.

These are significant numbers, especially when we consider the substantially reduced costs faced by Chinese manufacturers compared to their Canadian counterparts. This reality is particularly noteworthy in terms of labour costs.

China, of course, is the most important player in terms of the export to Canada of textiles and clothing, but there are other countries. India has already been mentioned. There has also been an impact on Canada's market due to imports from Mexico.

We must add to this the reality that the biggest trade partner of Canada's textile and clothing products, the United States, has followed Canadian suppliers in turning its attention abroad for

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cheaper products. This reduced share of the American market also significantly affects Canada's textile and clothing industry.

[*Translation*]

The previous Liberal government did take action in this matter, as indicated by my colleague, the former member for Ahuntsic, the honourable Eleni Bakopanos, during a debate on the issue. She spoke of the work accomplished by the Liberal government, mainly through public-private partnerships, to help these industries face the challenges of the new global economy.

A number of measures were considered, including lowering customs duties on imported textiles used by the Canadian clothing industry.

My Liberal colleagues from the Montreal area vigorously and effectively defended the textile and clothing industries in their respective ridings.

The member for Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel, home to many textile and clothing manufacturers, was a particularly energetic advocate for this industry.

[*English*]

The motion at hand calls for “a policy of assistance to the textile and clothing industries in order to enable the industries to compete throughout the world”. I am in full agreement with the spirit of supporting our textile and clothing sectors.

While we all recognize that there are new realities in terms of global economic development, it is essential that we as a country recognize through public policy the obligation of the Government of Canada to protect industries that provide a means of livelihood to so many Canadian workers.

I understand that there are many people within the industry who identify tariff policy as a means of protecting Canada's textile and clothing sector. Although these tariffs are among the highest in terms of other sectors, this is still very much worthy of review in regard to the unique nature of this industry and its importance to our national economy.

Similarly, I believe there is a great deal that the federal government and provincial governments across Canada can do to assist the textile and clothing sector, including training programs, export assistance and simple advocacy.

The member's motion also speaks specifically to the idea of allowing foreign made products made with Canadian textiles and clothing products to be imported without customs duties. This trade procedure is known as outward processing, and I believe that this indeed has the potential to be of great assistance to the textile and clothing industry in Canada.

In cooperation with the various partners within the Canadian textile and clothing industry, the government needs to move promptly in terms of outward processing, in conjunction with Canadian producers. It is my understanding that both the United States government and the European Union have already taken practical implementation steps in terms of outward processing on behalf of their textile and clothing sectors.

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As members of the House are aware, during the last Parliament the members who now comprise the government voted against the original motion dealing with this matter. I would encourage these members to join with the other parties in the House in support of this important motion.

As noted at the beginning of my remarks, there are phenomenal pressures on Canada's textile and clothing industries. The textile and clothing sector is a significant player in our national economy and, like other governments across the world, we have an obligation to assist these Canadian businesses and workers to compete effectively in the new global economy.

Quite frankly, it is clear that no sector of our economy operates within a vacuum. Jobs lost in one sector will invariably affect another and the ripple will continue.

The textile and clothing sector has experienced considerable pressure over the last 25 years. When those Canadians employed in this industry look to their government for assistance, it is important that their voices do not go unanswered.

I intend to support the motion. I encourage all other members, regardless of their party affiliation, to vote with Canadian workers in the textile and clothing industry by voting in favour of the motion.

• (1755)

Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to enter into the debate on Motion No. 158 put forward by my colleague from the Bloc. It gives us the opportunity to draw attention to an industry that suffers terribly from neglect from not just the current federal government but a series of federal governments.

Time does not permit us to go through the complex difficulties that this industry has. Let me start by saying though that I represent 43 garment manufacturers in the inner city of Winnipeg. That number is down dramatically from its peak perhaps 10 or 20 years ago when it was a major industry in my home province. Still today well-meaning companies are doing their best to hang on but it is literally by their fingernails, companies like Western Glove, Tanjay, Peerless and Gemini. Their workforces are dramatically reduced but they continue to try their best to maintain their second and third generation companies.

Let me for a minute express how important these jobs are to new Canadians. In many ways the garment sector in Winnipeg has offered gateway jobs for newcomers who come to Canada. It is often the first job that they find. These are good jobs. They are unionized jobs that pay a reasonable wage with fair working conditions. These are not sweatshops. These are quality jobs. Often there is a day care centre in the building. They are quality jobs that we are seeing fly out the window with very little action taken to try to arrest this flight of jobs.

The single issue I will dwell on today in the few minutes that I have is to appeal to the Government of Canada to reconsider exercising the safeguards that are available to stem the onslaught, the absolute floodgates of Chinese imports that have taken place since the January 1, 2005 WTO system of quotas was lifted for Chinese imports. This has been devastating to the riding that I represent. It is a material tangible issue we can see in the inner city of Winnipeg. I

do not rise in any way to object to international trade or free trade, et cetera. This is all about fairness.

The reason China enjoys this unfair competitive advantage is what we believe are the illegal and unfair subsidies given to the Chinese producers in the form of currency manipulation, non-performing loans, reduced or free utilities provided to those factories, subsidized shipping, sometimes no property taxes, export tax rebates, et cetera.

Hon. Jason Kenney: CSL benefits.

Mr. Pat Martin: Mr. Speaker, my colleague from the Conservatives agrees that Canadian manufacturers face an almost insurmountable unfair competitive disadvantage. For that very reason China agreed when it joined the WTO that safeguards might be needed to avoid disruptions in domestic marketplaces where it hoped to trade. Therefore, the United States availed itself of that offer from the WTO to limit increases in Chinese imports to 7.5% per year. The European Union very wisely also availed itself of this negotiated phase-in period. Mexico, Argentina, Turkey, most countries said if they did not phase in this influx of Chinese imports, their domestic industry would collapse. Why did Canada not do the same? It boggles the mind.

From January 1, 2005 to July 1, 2005 we were faced with a 40% increase overall in Chinese imports. In certain categories, for instance, men's jackets and blazers, imports grew 358% in the first five months. In the area of 11 million units came flocking in here. In women's skirts the growth rate accelerated 233%.

• (1800)

Clearly, China was waiting for this date. It is within its right and within the WTO rules to bombard the Canadian marketplace with Chinese imports. We know that if we look at labels for where things are manufactured, it is difficult to find something that is not manufactured in China or Bangladesh. It is more and more difficult to try to support our domestic industry.

We are not asking for anything unusual. It defies reason that when we brought it to the minister of international trade and the Liberal government in 2005, we were met with a stone wall. The Liberals said, "No, we are free traders. We drink our milk from a dirty cup". I suppose they were trying to be some kind of tough guys.

In actual fact, why not avail ourselves of the measures that were put in place to protect domestic markets? The result has been predictable, devastating and irreversible, but there is still time. The Conservative government could still tap in to this phase-in period. This is our opportunity to raise it with the new government and ask if it would please consider this.

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I should note that in November 2005 the Conservative official opposition critic for international trade said that he supported the safeguards, "A Conservative government would stand up for Canadian workers and work proactively through international trade policies to ensure Canada competes on a level playing field". He was speaking specifically about the garment industry trade safeguards when he was the official opposition critic. I think he is now the chair of the international trade committee.

The solution is simple. The WTO allows member countries to impose limits on the growth of specific categories of Chinese clothing imports. It can be 7.5% growth per year for a period of three years. This would translate into hundreds of millions of dollars of economic opportunities for our domestic manufacturers to be able to plan a strategy at least instead of being attacked in this way.

The question is, the rest of the world has acted, why not Canada? If we value this industry sector, if we have not abandoned the garment industry and simply resigned ourselves to the fact that Canada will not manufacture clothes any more, and I would like to believe that no one in the House of Commons believes that, then we have to help this industry in a way that is not a handout but is simply availing ourselves of the protective measures that other countries had the common sense to put forward.

There are strategies we could talk about further. The motion that we are negotiating today addresses some kind of a transition plan for the workers that are going to be displaced. There have been casualties. There has been collateral damage to the extreme. There have been more jobs lost since January 1, 2005 than there are left in the industry. We are down to less than 50,000 jobs in manufacturing across the country now.

My own riding of Winnipeg Centre took one of the hardest hits because the industry has a certain critical mass in Montreal and Toronto that we do not enjoy. It has been devastating and I do not say that trying to overstate the situation. My riding is the poorest riding in Canada already. To lose this many jobs in that key industrial sector in the inner city of my riding is a blow that I cannot remain silent about.

As we look at an industrial strategy for Canada and as we address pressures on the auto industry, we are urged to act. As we address pressures in the aerospace industry, we seem motivated to try to encourage our domestic industry sector so that it continues to be a viable force and a well-respected sector internationally.

I am urging the policy makers and decision makers in the House of Commons to apply the same attention to the garment industry. Whether it is men's clothing, women's clothing, textiles or weaving, it should be one of the value added industries that is exciting.

• (1805)

I appeal to all members present to pass this motion and extend the spirit of the motion by availing ourselves of the opportunity in the WTO. The safeguard measures are important. They might be our last chance to save this industry.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Robert Vincent (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is with pleasure that I rise today to speak to the motion of my colleague, the member for Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup.

My colleague had two good reasons to propose this motion. First, he wanted the government to act on the motion proposing to help the textile and clothing industries adopted by this House on October 5, 2005. Second—and we have heard it often from witnesses at the Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology—, the textile industry is being torn apart and the clothing industry is losing its shirt. We have to realize the pernicious effects of not being able to compete with some countries.

The clothing industry includes hosiery plants as well as clothing and clothing accessory manufacturers. Of all provinces, Quebec was the most affected in Canada. Its clothing industry lost 40% of its jobs. In 1988, there were 90,000 jobs in this sector. Today, there are 36,000. Between 1995 and 2005, the industry dropped from first to eighth place amongst manufacturing employers in Quebec. Dropping from first to eighth place, it is quite distressing.

The reason this issues touches me so deeply is that the Haute-Yamaska region has the most manufacturing activity in all the MRC of Montérégie. More than one person in three works in a factory. Consequently, I am very interested to be here and to speak about this industry.

A distinction must be made between the apparel industry and the textile industry. The textile industry is made up of spun yarn factories, woven fabrics factories and textile finishing factories. Furthermore, it produces also textiles, which includes factories that produce processed textiles, household items, floor coverings and industrial products.

In Quebec today, this industry represents 20,000 jobs, compared to 24,000 in 2000 and 36,000 in 1988; that is a loss of 16,000 jobs. The textile industry is going through a crisis, and it must redirect its production. In the textile sector, the prospects are best in artificial arteries and hearts, airbags and parachutes. All these activities require a lot of research and development. We have heard loud and clear the message conveyed by the people who appeared before the Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology. They indicated that they valued research and development and that, in order to help them, the government should invest in the search for new development niches.

I could compare that with the government's responsibility concerning the modernization of the industry. Safeguards must be used. Such safeguards are provided in trade agreements to give the industries a few years of respite that they need to change their focus. They have to be given a chance in matters of research and development to see what they can do. But they need time for that.

Ottawa has never supported the industry. The federal government has a big zero on its report card, and the results of the Conservatives are below zero. The government never tried to discuss or make a deal with China about a potential cap on Chinese import increases. The government never tried to improve assistance programs to speed up the industry's modernization.

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There were some programs. There were CATIP and CANtex, but the maximum allowable was \$100,000. What can an industry do with \$100,000? It can change its transport truck, and nothing else.

Among other cuts announced last fall by the Conservatives, \$25 million was taken out of CANtex. The programs assisting the textile industries were cut. Who did that? The Minister of Industry. It was a Quebec minister who stabbed the Quebec industry once again. Another Quebec minister, the Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, did not say a word to prevent this. The Quebec Conservatives are not very useful.

On December 12, 2006, the Standing Committee on International Trade urged the government to limit textile and clothing imports and begin negotiations to that effect with China. The government did not do anything. Just recently, on February 6, 2007, the Standing Committee on Industry, Natural Resources, Science and Technology tabled its report on the future of the manufacturing sector. The committee indicated that textile and clothing industries were on the verge of collapse and called on the government to abandon its laissez-faire policy.

● (1810)

However, today again, the Conservatives from Quebec who, last week, let down the Quebec aerospace industry, are showing that they are not only useless, but that their approach is harmful by now betraying the textile and clothing industries.

What about solutions? We often hear the Conservatives say that the Bloc criticizes but never proposes any solution. Let me suggest some solutions: first, let us allow clothing made abroad with Canadian textiles to enter duty free; let us impose stricter rules of origin on less developed countries; let us negotiate Canada's entry in agreements reached between the United States and Latin America; let us adopt a buy local policy that is compliant with international agreements.

Then, we talked about older workers. What can we do for them? The Conservatives set up a program for a period of one year. The Montreal and the Quebec City regions were excluded from this program. We know that in Montreal, there are several textile plants and clothing plants. But, I think that these people were forgotten, even if they worked all their lives for the growth of Quebec. When it is time to help them end their career decently, they are left aside. They are being told to retrain. How can you retrain 55 year old people with little education? I do not know. I do not understand the approach of the Conservatives on this issue.

The Bloc Québécois is in favour of the former program for older worker adjustment, POWA, which gave workers aged 55 and older the opportunity to earn a decent salary, at least until they received their pension. That program should be brought back in order to help these workers do something meaningful with their life.

Other solutions are also a step in the right direction. In both cases, the workers have had little schooling, as I was saying. Safeguards provided for in trade agreements—continuing along the same lines—ensure that import tariffs are maintained on clothing and textiles produced in Canada by introducing quotas on Chinese imports, under the protocol on China's accession to the WTO. When China joined the WTO, it was agreed that countries could limit the increase

of Chinese imports by introducing temporary quotas, in order to prevent certain industries from being decimated as a result of this industrial giant's membership.

The United States and the European Union held discussions with China. They agreed to place a ceiling on imports of Chinese textiles and clothing. Canada did nothing. The government failed to act, with the result that, after China joined the WTO in 2002, its exports of clothing to Canada rose by approximately \$1.8 billion, an increase of 86%. What will it be tomorrow?

We must adopt an international policy that will prevent discount offshoring, by working to include in trade agreements the universal minimum standards recognized in international agreements on the fundamental rights of workers and environmental protection.

Labelling is of great interest. How can we determine if we are buying a Canadian product? It is not on the label. You can look all you want in all the shops for a Canadian-made good, but you will not find one. You can look high and low, but to no avail. The first thing to do would be to identify the origin of the product.

● (1815)

The Speaker: The time provided for the consideration of private members' business has now expired and the order is dropped to the bottom of the order of precedence on the order paper.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved

[*English*]

CANADIAN HERITAGE

Mr. Michael Savage (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to have a chance to follow up on a couple of questions that I asked this week in the House.

I asked questions on successive days about the extravagant use of limousines by the Minister of Canadian Heritage while at the Juno's last year in Halifax. I received no answer on two key fronts.

There are a whole host of questions, but two key questions were never answered. Number one: Does the government consider it an extravagant use of taxpayers' money? Number two: Why were Treasury Board guidelines broken when these expenses were not posted on the website as required?

Last year Halifax was delighted to host the Juno's. In fact, Nova Scotia is one of the cultural capitals of Canada. We were delighted to have the Juno's for a number of reasons, one of which was the economic boom that it brought to Halifax. Taxpayers, however, were not aware of the extent to which the heritage minister contributed to that economic boom by the use of taxpayers' dollars.

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I have the bill for the limo services that were used by the minister while she was in Halifax. It is interesting to note that she arrived on March 31 and left on April 3. On March 31, two different limousines were required. In fact, one was a mini-van and one was a limo. Apparently the mini-van was not good enough and the limo was requested. It took two orders to get her into the Delta Barrington.

Later that day she had another limo from 1:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. for three hours. That evening she required a stretch limo from 4:30 p.m. until 11:30 p.m. It was on standby, meaning it was not even used. It was just sitting there being charged to taxpayers while she was doing other stuff, some of which could have been business, some of which could have been personal.

On April 1 a sedan limo from 9:45 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. was used for seven hours. Most of that time the limo was on standby. Later that evening, a stretch limo was required from 5:30 p.m. until 11 p.m., with a half hour break, and then another limo from 11:30 p.m. to 1:30 a.m. That was hospitality night, and the minister should go to some of those.

The hotel the minister stayed at, the Delta Barrington, is exactly one-tenth of one kilometre from where the Juno's took place. The hospitalities were all in the same general area as well. The Economy Shoe Shop is a great place and one that I would recommend to many members for the artichoke dip. It is a great spot. It is where CTV had the big bash. Did the minister really need 7.5 hours of stretch limo on standby while she was inside the Economy Shoe Shop, which is less than one-tenth of one kilometre from the Metro Centre? The Metro Centre and the hotel also happen to be connected by pedway and underground tunnel. It seems a little excessive.

The next day she used a stretch limo. The day after the Juno's it says here that a stretch limo was on standby from 12 noon until 5:30 p.m. That evening, two sedan limos were required for standby for the red carpet walk event. So even when she walked, she needed limousines. It boggles the mind. After the Juno's a stretch limo was required from 11:30 p.m. until 1:30 a.m. The next morning a stretch limo took her out to the airport.

The total bill for limousines for the approximately three days that the heritage minister was in Halifax was \$5,475, of which she repaid \$2,000, leaving \$1,000 a day for stretch limos to the taxpayer.

I notice the parliamentary secretary here. He is not the guilty party. He is probably as disgusted by this as I am. He is most likely armed with all kinds of notes about the wonderful things that the minister has done for arts and culture. It is a miracle, all these cuts that the rest of Canada knows about.

I would give him three of his four minutes to give us that stuff. That is fine. I would ask him to take one minute to answer two simple questions. Is \$1,000 a day for a limousine reasonable? Why did the minister break Treasury Board guidelines, try to hide her expenses, and not post them on the website?

• (1820)

Mr. Jim Abbott (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise tonight because it gives me an opportunity to totally refute the member's assertion.

The Minister of Canadian Heritage and Status of Women followed all of the Treasury Board guidelines. In fact, I would like to take this opportunity to set the record straight.

In a one year comparison of proactive disclosure, it is clearly shown that our government takes seriously its responsibility to Canadian taxpayers.

In terms of hospitality and travel expenses, the former Liberal minister of Canadian heritage spent \$182,693.96 in 2005. In 2006 the current minister's office just spent over \$82,000, a difference of \$100,000 more than the current minister spent. We are getting the job done at less than half the cost.

I would also remind the member opposite that it was the former Liberal heritage minister, Hélène Scherrer, who hopped on a Challenger jet, flew to Calgary, rented a limo for her jaunt to Banff where she delivered a purely partisan political attack in the middle of an election campaign, and that too was all at the taxpayers' expense. That was not bad enough. The Liberal minister decided she did not want to travel with her staffer, so she rented a car for her to get her back. Access to information requests on the cost of the Challenger trip for the Liberal minister's Banff bonanza came in at over \$23,000.

In fact, when we talk about proactive disclosure, let us not forget why this policy had to be instituted in the first place. It was because of the Liberal sponsorship scandal. The current government has instituted the most sweeping accountability reforms in the history of the country because members of the party opposite could not keep their sticky fingers out of the cookie jar.

Mr. Michael Savage: Mr. Speaker, there was not a word about the subject in question, not a word. The government talks about accountability, transparency and credibility. The World Wrestling Federation has more credibility than this bunch.

It is an outrage to Canadians regarding \$1,000 a day for limousines, hiding the expense, and misleading the House of Commons. It is an affront to Canadians. It is still not on the website. I will table that from today if you want, Mr. Speaker.

I have a question. In this specific case, why the extravagance? Is \$1,000 a day for a car a good expenditure? Why was it not disclosed and why was Parliament misled?

Mr. Jim Abbott: Mr. Speaker, the member is not only a Liberal but apparently he has a little difficulty hearing. The \$100,000 difference between the Conservative minister and the former Liberal minister apparently does not seem to register on the member's scale.

The minister said she would look into the proactive disclosure and she has. The former Liberal minister's office picked up and chose what went on the disclosure for transportation. We are a government of accountability and we are committed to disclosing all expenses of the minister.

Adjournment Proceedings

● (1825)

MANITOBA ECONOMY

Hon. Anita Neville (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, during question period on November 23, 2006, I asked the question as to who on the government's side was minding Manitoba. I did so because it was apparent that no one on that side was speaking up for the province and for the concerns of Manitobans. The answers that day were non-answers.

The issues on which they remain silent or absent are numerous and are hurting many Manitobans. The most notable issue is that of the Canadian Wheat Board. There is absolute silence, despite the undemocratic attacks on the Wheat Board. There is silence as many farmers, many rural communities and many families are put at risk. There is silence at the potential devastating economic impact on the city of Winnipeg, with over 2,000 jobs, a payroll of over \$60 million and potential devastation at the corner of Portage and Main.

The labour market partnership agreement, \$129 million, signed with the province of Manitoba for training, employment, literacy and apprenticeship for youth, aboriginals, the disabled and people at risk, was cancelled, with not a word of protest. The child care agreement, again signed with the province of Manitoba, over \$150 million over five years, for 6,000 designated rural and urban spaces, already designated, already planned for, was cancelled without a word. Homelessness funding for operating costs and some for capital was cancelled.

Macdonald Youth Services, providing support for many teens at risk, has been unable to get its phone calls returned since early November. We have heard nothing on the issues of the health of Lake Winnipeg, an important recreational and economic force in the province. There has been silence on the east-west power grid and the cut to literacy. Then there is a tepid response when there was an outcry for a short term.

The court challenges program, one of the few national programs in the city of Winnipeg, was eliminated without a word of concern. Women's programs, with funding approved locally, were cancelled nationally and again not a word, silence. With the closure of the Status of Women office in Winnipeg, there was silence. With the Kelowna accord, again, there was silence.

What a difference it would have made in the lives of many Manitobans for housing, education, water and economic opportunity, but there was silence. We remain optimistic that the Public Health Agency headquarters will remain in Winnipeg, and we certainly hope so. We are hopeful that the government will ensure that the museum of human rights becomes a reality.

My question is for those on the opposite side, those who have the authority. Why do they not speak up for the province of Manitoba?

Mr. Pierre Poilievre (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, one of the astonishing things that the Conservatives learned upon forming government in January 2006 was that our Liberal predecessors would regularly announce their support for particular projects and then refuse to sign supporting agreements and, in the rare cases when they did sign agreements, they would not allocate any funding whatsoever to fulfill them.

I will give one example. The Manitoba floodway is but one example of a shady practice of where the previous Liberal government made a promise but did not allocate the necessary funds to fulfill that promise.

In September 2005, the then Liberal Treasury Board president committed to build a full floodway in Manitoba, a project that would have cost an estimated \$665 million. He announced that the Government of Canada would cover half the cost of this project, approximately \$332 million. However, when we came to office and started checking the books, we found out that the federal government had only agreed to contribute \$120 million, a small fraction of what it had promised publicly. In fact, the \$120 million only covered the first of three phases of the floodway.

Last summer, when the second phase of the floodway was to begin, we were facing possible work shortages because no actual money was available. Despite their much publicized promise, the Liberals had not actually budgeted the remaining \$213 million to bring that project to fruition.

There is some good news. I am happy that my colleague, the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, acted swiftly to come up with an additional \$42 million immediately to ensure that tendering and construction would remain on schedule.

As for the remaining \$170 million, I want to assure the House that, unlike the previous Liberal government, we will ensure the money is budgeted and is available.

A similar situation occurred with respect to the labour market partnership with Manitoba, another agreement signed with great pomp and ceremony but never allotted any money by the previous Liberal government.

The government is engaged in ongoing discussions with all provinces as to how to assist each with its labour market development and post-secondary training. Unlike the previous government, which would sign agreements without funding, the present Minister of Finance is in the process of serious discussions about how best to restore fiscal balance.

Since forming government in January 2006, Canada's new government has cooperated with provincial governments and private sector partners to see that projects, like the Manitoba floodway project, have the funding that was promised so we can deliver real results for real people.

That is what this government is all about. We make a promise and we deliver, instead of following the ancient practice of the previous government of making false promises that it had no intention whatsoever of keeping and for which it did not allocate a single, solitary red cent in order to honour.

Adjournment Proceedings

•(1830)

Hon. Anita Neville: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member opposite for his comments but it would have been nice to see a Manitoban here to respond. Again, it is part of a pattern.

The member opposite claims that moneys were not allocated. Those who were involved in the signing of the labour market partnership agreement know where that money was allocated. It was redistributed by the government, and those who were expecting it in Manitoba had it allocated and knew where it was going.

The member opposite neglected to answer the many other issues that I raised: the Wheat Board, east-west grid, Lake Winnipeg and homelessness. I ask members to come to Winnipeg on a day when it is minus 39° and see some of the things we are dealing with. When we see a \$400,000 funding cut to a program and no response on the other side, no phone call returned, it is indeed time for that side to stand up for Manitoba and be there.

Mr. Pierre Poilievre: Mr. Speaker, let us talk about those state run day care programs the hon. member alluded to. The member would like all Canadian parents who are now receiving \$100 a

month for every child under six to lose that money so that she and lobbyists from the day care industry can then decide how that money should be spent and then Manitobans would not have the ability to determine how to raise their own children.

The Liberal Party wants to take away the \$100 choice in child care allowance that goes to every child under the age of six. Not only that, it would block the tough on crime initiatives that we are taking to clean up the streets in places like Manitoba, in places like Winnipeg, where crime is increasingly a problem and where streets are ruled by guns, gangs and thugs. The hon. member would allow that to go on.

We are acting to pass tough on crime legislation. Why are the Liberals blocking that legislation.

The Speaker: The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 6:34 p.m.)

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