



CANADA

House of Commons Debates

VOLUME 141 • NUMBER 024 • 1st SESSION • 39th PARLIAMENT

OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Tuesday, May 16, 2006

—
Speaker: The Honourable Peter Milliken

CONTENTS

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

Also available on the Parliament of Canada Web Site at the following address:

<http://www.parl.gc.ca>

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, May 16, 2006

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

•(1000)

[*Translation*]

WITNESS PROTECTION PROGRAM ACT

Mr. Steven Blaney (Lévis—Bellechasse, CPC) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-286, An Act to amend the Witness Protection Program Act (protection of spouses whose life is in danger) and to make a consequential amendment to another Act.

He said: Mr. Speaker, this morning, as the member for Lévis—Bellechasse, it is an honour and a privilege for me to introduce in this House a bill designed to extend the witness protection program to spouses whose life is in danger.

This will help men but it will help women even more. The fact is that 80% of victims of criminal assault are women, and half of these assaults are committed by ex-spouses.

My sincere thanks to the member for Prince George—Peace River for his considerable help in developing this bill. I think that all members of this House would do well to support it. I personally invite them to support this bill that, I am convinced, will better protect men and women who are victims of assault.

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

•(1005)

[*English*]

Mr. Norman Doyle: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I wonder if we could revert to presenting reports from committees. I was standing at the time of presenting reports from committees, but you failed to notice me.

The Speaker: I apologize to the hon. member. I did not have anything on my list and I did not see the hon. member rise.

Is it agreed to revert to presenting reports from committees?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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 first report of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration, on citizenship issues, entitled “Procedures on how to review Order in Council appointments”.

* * *

NATIONAL PEACEKEEPERS' DAY ACT

Mr. Brent St. Denis (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusksing, Lib.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-287, An Act respecting a National Peacekeepers' Day.

He said: Mr. Speaker, with my colleague, I am pleased to introduce a bill which, if passed, would create on August 9 of every year a National Peacekeepers' Day. It was some 32 years ago, on August 9, 1974, that nine Canadian Forces peacekeepers en route from Beirut to Damascus were killed by a surface to air missile. They represent the several hundred peacekeepers who have been killed serving Canada and the world in this capacity.

Inasmuch as my riding was once the riding of Lester B. Pearson, I think it is most appropriate that this bill be sponsored by the member from the riding, and it is especially appropriate at this time, as we discuss Canada's role in Afghanistan, to remind ourselves that Canada's place in the world is indeed that of peacekeeping.

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

* * *

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Hon. Rob Nicholson (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there have been consultations, and I believe you would find the unanimous consent of the House for the following. I move:

That, notwithstanding any standing order and usual practice of the House, at the start of government orders on Wednesday, May 17, 2006 the House consider a government motion in the name of the Prime Minister:

That,

(1) whereas this House on April 10, 2006 debated a motion in support of Canada's significant commitment in Afghanistan,

(2) whereas Canada's commitment in Afghanistan is an important contribution, with that of more than 30 other countries, to international efforts under the auspices of the United Nations and NATO,

Business of Supply

(3) whereas these international efforts are reducing poverty, enhancing human rights and gender equality, strengthening civil society and helping to build a free, secure and self-sustaining democratic state for all Afghan men, women and children, and

(4) whereas Canada's commitment in Afghanistan is consistent with Canada's support of freedom, democracy, the rule of law and human rights around the world,

this House support the government's two year extension of Canada's diplomatic, development, civilian police and military personnel in Afghanistan and the provision of funding and equipment for this extension;

and that no member shall speak for more than 20 minutes and that following each speech a period not exceeding 10 minutes shall be made available, if required, to allow members to ask questions and comment briefly on matters relevant to the speech and to allow responses thereto; any member may indicate to the Speaker that he or she will be dividing his or her time with another member; that during debate, the Speaker shall not receive any amendments, dilatory motions, quorum calls, or requests for unanimous consent; and when no member rises to speak or after six hours of debate, whichever is earlier, the Speaker shall put forthwith all questions necessary to dispose of the motion; that no proceedings pursuant to Standing Order 38 be taken up this day; and that the House shall immediately adjourn to the next sitting, Thursday, May 18, 2006, at 9 a.m.

● (1010)

The Speaker: Does the hon. government House leader have the unanimous consent of the House to propose this motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

* * *

[Translation]

PETITIONS

TEMISKAMING FIRST NATION ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY

Mr. Marc Lemay (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to table in this House a petition signed by several dozen people in my riding. They are asking that the Temiskaming First Nation aboriginal school at Notre-Dame-du-Nord remain open and receive additional funds to enable it to operate so that a roadblock on the road through the aboriginal community of Temiskaming First Nation at Notre-Dame-du-Nord can be avoided.

[English]

BILL C-222

Mr. Inky Mark (Dauphin—Swan River—Marquette, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour this morning to table two petitions on behalf of the people of Dauphin—Swan River—Marquette.

The first petitions calls upon the House of Commons to enact Bill C-222, an act to recognize and protect Canada's hunting, trapping and fishing heritage, to ensure the rights of present and future Canadians to enjoy these activities are protected in law.

TAXATION

Mr. Inky Mark (Dauphin—Swan River—Marquette, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in the second petition the petitioners call upon the House of Commons to enact legislation to eliminate the federal excise tax on diesel fuel and gasoline used in farming operations and commercial fisheries, to cap the amount of tax it collects on gasoline

and to eliminate the practice of applying the GST to provincial fuel tax and federal excise tax, a practice that charges tax on top of tax.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Rod Bruinooge (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[Translation]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

OPPOSITION MOTION—PESTICIDES

Hon. Jack Layton (Toronto—Danforth, NDP) moved:

That, in the opinion of the House, beginning on the 22nd day of April (Earth Day) next:

(a) all pesticides which are regulated pursuant to the Pest Control Products Act be banned: (i) within a dwelling-house; (ii) on any parcel of land on which a dwelling-house is situated; (iii) on any place that is within one hundred metres of a parcel of land described in paragraph (ii); (iv) in any school, hospital, office or similar building in which members of the public customarily stay for more than a day or work; or (v) on any private or public land that is customarily used by members of the public as visitors, licensees or in any other authorized capacity for recreation or entertainment, including but not limited to parks and sports grounds;

(b) that this ban not apply to a building used for the husbandry of animals, the cultivation of plants or the storage, processing, packaging or distribution of plants or animals or products made primarily from plants or animals, or in the immediate vicinity of such a building;

(c) that this ban not apply to a control product used within an enclosed building: to purify water intended for the use of humans or animals; to control or destroy a health hazard; to control or destroy pests that have caused an infestation; for commercial agricultural purposes; as a wood preservative; or, as an insect repellent for personal use; and

(d) that should further exemptions be sought to this pesticide ban, then the onus to prove safety shall be placed on the manufacturer to show to the satisfaction of both the Minister of Health and the House of Commons Standing Committee on Health, through scientific and medical evidence, that an exemption is justified.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Victoria.

[English]

I rise to speak on behalf of all New Democrats to our motion to ban the use of pesticides used for cosmetic purposes in private homes and public spaces, a motion that I am pleased to have rest in my name.

In so doing, I would like to recognize the important work being done on this issue by our members for Winnipeg Centre, Skeena—Bulkley Valley and Victoria.

Only five countries in the world use more pesticides per capita than Canada. This is an issue that impacts our environment and the very health of Canadians, which is why New Democrats are calling upon parliamentarians from all parties to support the motion and take a positive step forward on the issue together.

Business of Supply

In backyards and school yards, parks, gardens, green spaces across Canada, a toxic cocktail of cancer causing chemicals are being used to kill weeds and pests. While these carcinogens are very effective at keeping our yards and public spaces looking green, they are far from being green. We are talking about pesticides that in many cases may have life-altering implications, not just in the near term but decades down the road, such as immune system damage, reproductive damage, skeletal abnormalities, skin damage and cancer.

As the Canadian Cancer Society has said:

Since ornamental use of pesticides has no countervailing health benefit and has the potential to cause harm, we call for a ban on the use of pesticides on lawns and gardens.

Why does the federal government continue to allow these cancer causing pesticides to be used? These chemicals are seeping into our soil, leaching into the water we drink, being absorbed by our homes, harming our bodies and claiming the lives of our children.

Only yesterday we watched as a warehouse fire broke out near the village of Debden, Saskatchewan. The fire burned pesticides and placed hundreds of school children at potential health risk. This dramatic example shows the importance not only of safe pesticide storage but the threat that chemicals such as these can pose.

• (1015)

[*Translation*]

We have known for quite some time that pesticides have long-term effects that are both serious and harmful. It is our young people, our children, who suffer the terrible consequences. Despite the accumulation of evidence, the range of harmful, and readily accessible, chemical products continues to grow.

Until now, the federal government has not taken any measures to regulate cosmetic pesticides, even though their harmful and serious effects on Canadians are indisputable. It is time for that to change.

[*English*]

The wait and see attitude of past governments puts more and more Canadians at risk. The science is in. Enough time has been wasted. It is incumbent upon us as parliamentarians to do what is right for our communities and the families that we represent, the people who rely on us to be their voice in this place. It is time to take concrete action to ban the use of these unnecessary cosmetic pesticides, which is why New Democrats are moving this motion.

That is why we are calling on the pesticide manufacturers to prove that their products are in fact safe before they can be marketed to the Canadian public. Just as the government oversees and regulates the use of drugs, the use of pesticides must be held to similar government oversight.

By reversing the onus of proof with proper scientific and government oversight, we will move Canada toward a greener, cleaner future that is healthier for our children and our grandchildren.

[*Translation*]

Our actions have real and serious consequences for the environment, which is our country's greatest asset.

It is obvious that the environment is not one of the Prime Minister's five priorities. While the former Liberal government adopted an approach that favoured press releases over policies, the Conservatives have adopted the approach of eliminating programs and then waiting to see what happens.

They cut programs and have no plans for replacing them with something more effective. We must fill that void with meaningful measures and respect the commitments made to our citizens and to the entire world. Canada must set an example. By banning cosmetic pesticides, we will be taking a step in the right direction.

[*English*]

Today I am calling on the Prime Minister, the government and all members of the House to support this motion for the health of our children and of all Canadians.

With no action forthcoming from the federal government, as so often is the case, citizens and communities are taking steps ahead of government, from Vancouver to Toronto, from Montreal to Halifax. In over a hundred communities large and small across Canada, municipalities have already taken action on the use of these deadly substances.

• (1020)

[*Translation*]

In spite of fierce opposition, my own home town—Hudson, Quebec—introduced the first such ban in the country.

This ban weathered the attacks and court challenges. It was ahead of its time. We should follow the example of Hudson and all other communities where the citizens have claimed their right to live without carcinogenic pesticides. Their actions are a source of inspiration for us all. Every member must demonstrate good citizenship by adopting this motion today.

[*English*]

Even the Supreme Court became involved in the Hudson case and ruled that the precautionary principle was an important factor that all legislators at all levels should consider in decision making. The Federation of Canadian Municipalities, of which I had the honour to be the president at one time, intervened in the case to support Hudson, a case that was initiated by a group of women in Hudson who were concerned about the health of their kids and started a petition about 15 years ago.

In those communities where bans are in effect, gardens are still in bloom, green spaces still flourish, landscapers and weed control specialists provide alternatives to pesticides and more jobs. The result is not just the appearance of healthy gardens but in fact healthy places for plants to grow, for children to play and for Canadian families to enjoy nature without the threat of toxic consequences.

Business of Supply

Some in this place will argue today, I am sure, that this is enough, that we should abandon Canadians in their communities to deal with this deadly issue on their own but that is simply not good enough. Not every municipality is able to adopt the measures that some municipalities have done but every Canadian deserves to live free from the use of cosmetic pesticides. The health of Canadians simply has to come first. It is time that the federal government, indeed, it is time that members of this House stood up to protect the people of Canada from exposure to pesticides that we know are harmful to the health of the most vulnerable among us.

As Margaret Sanborn, of McMaster University, said, "Pesticides are designed to kill something and that should be a cause of concern".

It turns out that those pesticides are killing our kids.

The motion that we brought forward is not revolutionary in practice but its practice may well revolutionize the impact that the toxins and the carcinogens found in pesticides are having on the health of Canadians, most particularly, children and pregnant women.

This is a good first step that the federal government can take to protect all Canadians from chemicals linked to cancer, birth defects, disease and sickness. It is a measure we can take today to help clean our environment for tomorrow.

Hon. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for introducing a very positive measure. I have two quick questions that will actually help me sell the motion.

First, I think it would help the public if he could give some examples of the chemicals involved and the technical proven risks of them. I am sure he has some of that data and I think it would help everyone who is listening today.

Second, does the member know if the present FCM has a position on this?

Hon. Jack Layton: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his questions, comments and for highlighting the role of FCM. In fact, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, when I had the opportunity to be the president of the organization, was very active on this issue and intervened in the Supreme Court case in order to help the town of Hudson, which is down the road toward Montreal where I grew up, to get the right to pass the kind of measure that we are talking about here today for all of Canada. The federation's leadership should be noted.

In addition, the federation has extensive programs now so that municipalities can move from the traditional practices to more sustainable forms of gardening and lawn care, et cetera, in their member municipalities.

With regard to examples of the chemicals, my goodness, the list would be awfully long but we certainly would want to highlight chemicals such as 2,4-D as being a cause for concern. It apparently is one that will be made available once again.

I recall the time when I had the opportunity to be on a global panel to examine the impact of persistent organic pollutants. The Innu spoke to us about how the toxic pesticides used over the years in our societies in the developed urban centres had made their way all the

way into the mother's milk of the Innu. Even though they do not produce the compounds and do not have lawns, they were the ones suffering the most from our chemicals. These chemicals, when we use them on our lawns, can be transported to people far away in time, in place and in circumstance with devastating results.

The motion we proposed calls for us to take responsibility for some of these impacts and to prevent them in the future.

• (1025)

Mr. Ron Cannan (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to clarify the member's position.

In my nine years in local government I worked with the Union of British Columbia Municipalities and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities. I was also involved with Communities in Bloom, which is a national organization concerned with pesticides, horticulture and community beautification. This discussion has taken place in many council chambers throughout our country.

Could the member clarify his views on integrated pest management and how that would play within his proposal?

Hon. Jack Layton: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the reference to integrated pest management, IPM as we came to know it in the debates many years ago.

My first personal interaction with this whole concept actually had to do with how we could better deal with cockroaches in apartment buildings. I was advocating for tenants. Their apartments were being sprayed and the cockroaches were being forced from one apartment unit to the next. Many of the residents were complaining about the impact of the toxic chemicals that were being used.

Sure enough, I was chairing the Toronto Board of Health at the time. We brought forward a proposal that would not only virtually eliminate the cockroaches, but would also eliminate the toxic compounds that were being used. It produced a terrific result in terms of that whole approach. Apartment buildings became a lot more liveable as a result.

The fact is that there have been wonderful initiatives with municipal governments working with organizations like the FCM and Communities in Bloom to find ways to reduce the requirement and in fact not to require at all the use of toxic compounds while still producing beautiful gardens.

In my most recent visit to Halifax, which is one of the larger communities to show real leadership, I saw absolutely stunning gardens. There is lots of employment in the industry to keep those gardens looking beautiful. It has legislation in place which is not dissimilar to what we are proposing for the whole of Canada.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Denise Savoie (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am very happy to support this motion and speak today to this matter, which is extremely important to Canadians.

It is already six years since the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development recommended that the federal government should give absolute priority to protecting human health and the environment by applying the precautionary principle in all pest management decisions.

Business of Supply

As in many other areas, the Liberals did nothing. It is high time now for this federal government to act in the interest of Canadians and not in the interest of the chemical companies.

Canadians expect the government to act in their interest to reduce the presence of pesticides in the environment. For many years now, communities all across Canada have been exploring ways of encouraging the choice of lower-risk products and reducing the use of pesticides for cosmetic purposes, that is to say, products that are not necessary to protect health.

Having been a city councillor in previous years, I am familiar with the efforts that many of these municipalities and cities have made. Six years ago, for example, the people of Victoria, known as the "garden city", started a campaign for a bylaw against pesticides. They got organized, did their research, had scientists come, and demonstrated to a great majority of city council that pesticides were not necessary to have beautiful gardens and lovely lawns. A process is now underway, as a result, to restrict the use of pesticides, as is the case in many other cities in Canada.

The province of Quebec has also taken steps to reduce the use of certain pesticides in order to protect the health of Quebecers and the environment.

All Canadians are entitled to this kind of protection. They are entitled to equitable protection and a less toxic environment. Municipal governments and some provincial governments have taken steps to fill the gap left by the federal government's absence from this important area.

The Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development, Ms. Gélinas, issued a stinging critique of the federal government's management of pesticides. She said:

—the federal government is not managing pesticides effectively...the federal government still cannot ensure that the older pesticides we are using are safe—

She added that the public is concerned about the dangers of pesticides and that, as a result of her audit, she is concerned as well.

According to her audit, for example, the federal government is not adequately ensuring that many pesticides used in Canada meet current standards for protecting public health and the quality of the environment. She discovered major flaws in the regulation and evaluation of a new pesticide. She also revealed that many products are approved in an unsatisfactory way.

She noted as well that the product evaluation methods are not up to date and that the re-evaluation of older but still widely-used pesticides proceeds at a very slow pace in Canada.

She also said:

It is likely that some pesticides on the market that have not yet been re-evaluated will also fail to meet today's standards.

The federal government's inaction in this matter is appalling.

● (1030)

[English]

The reasons for this motion and the need for action are clear. The Ontario College of Family Physicians has verified positive associations between pesticide exposure and cancers of the brain, prostate, kidney and pancreas, non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, leukemia,

nervous system disorders, birth defects, and other developmental disorders. The doctors' orders are clear: Avoid exposure to all pesticides whenever and wherever possible.

I would like to read to the House, which is largely male dominated, a quote by Dr. Paul Claman, clinical director of reproductive medicine at the University of Ottawa, who said, "Scientific evidence links landscaping pesticides to impaired male fertility". I will just leave that for the reflection of the many men in this House.

Close to 70,000 Canadians will die of cancer this year and 149,000 will be diagnosed. We spend hundreds of millions of dollars seeking a cure, and yet the government hesitates on a simple act of prevention.

We may hear today from some members who are skeptical about the science, that the science is not absolute. They will point to studies that purport to raise doubts about the link between pesticides and cancer, birth defects and other health problems. Of course, science is rarely absolute. However, there is some absolute science out there about pesticides. In large doses they are poison. Where the science is not absolute is with respect to safe doses. There is no conclusive scientific evidence that a safe dose exists.

This motion reverses the onus in favour of Canadians' health and the environment by requiring scientific and medical proof, assessed in a public forum instead of behind closed doors, that a chemical is safe. This is the precautionary principle where there is persuasive reason to believe that some harm can be done, preventive measures are taken. We do not do that enough. We must prevent health problems before they occur. This is not just precautionary, it is just common sense.

The most compelling argument is that it is entirely unnecessary. Simple cost effective measures and alternatives exist. The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation itself argues that by simply using a mixture of grasses instead of a monoculture lawn, homeowners can avoid pesticides and use less water, less fuel, less maintenance and less money on their lawns.

If hon. members want proof, they can just walk outside these doors to the front lawn of Parliament Hill which is maintained free of pesticides. They can wander down to Rideau Hall where the Governor General's extensive lawns and gardens are maintained with no health risks to her young daughter and the many visitors.

Using pesticides for ornamental use is like treating a cold with chemotherapy. It is a no-brainer. Why take this unnecessary risk with the health of our children?

● (1035)

[Translation]

Mr. Steven Blaney (Lévis—Bellechasse, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest to the presentation by the member for Victoria, which was clear and concise.

Business of Supply

In recent years, we have all witnessed an increased awareness of pesticide use. I remember 30 years ago, when my father used to spray herbicides on the apple trees and the lawn without taking any safety precautions. The quantities were approximate. He would have to go to bed for two days afterward. Since then, he has followed the directions and he is much better.

I would like to ask the member a question. The European Commission is recognized for taking fairly progressive environmental measures. In 2001, it re-evaluated 2,4-D and concluded that it was acceptable for use on lawns if it was applied as directed. In 2005, the United States Environmental Protection Agency approved this product for the same uses.

What does my colleague think of these two conclusions, one from a progressive body and the other from our neighbour, both of which consider that this product is appropriate for use?

● (1040)

Ms. Denise Savoie: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question.

It is true that a number of agencies did re-evaluate 2,4-D. What I found interesting in the research I did was that all the re-evaluations were based on exactly the same documentation, which was produced by a single company and provided to several agencies. While it might appear that the product was re-evaluated several times, in fact it was re-evaluated only once.

I therefore believe in the rationale and the need for rethinking how such products are re-evaluated. What is more, in her report, Ms. Gélinas mentions that the evaluation methods need to be called into question.

[*English*]

Hon. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member's comments were very thoughtful, but I have a couple of factual questions for her.

Is the motion limited to pesticides and herbicides? Approximately how many chemicals would be involved? If the motion passes, could the member also outline the process for it to continue on through the parliamentary system?

Ms. Denise Savoie: Mr. Speaker, if I understood the first question correctly, the member asked about the percentage of cosmetic use of pesticides. I have been told that it represents a substantial amount, up to 35%. I base the percentage on what I have read. I would have to rely upon the experts to give a conclusive answer on that.

He asked about the process to follow up on this, if passed. As I understand, this type of motion originally came from the Liberal side of the House, and I know there is a fair amount of support for it in the House. A similar type of motion has often been considered by many people and communities in Quebec, and I know there is a lot of support there.

If the motion passes, hopefully it will be converted into a bill and pressure will be placed on the government to act as soon as possible.

Mr. Patrick Brown (Barrie, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Northumberland—Quinte West.

First, I would like to thank the hon. leader of the New Democratic Party for raising the important issue of pest management and control. I share with him a deep concern for the health of all Canadians, particularly the most vulnerable ones, the children, the elderly and the sick, the people who are most at risk from unsafe products.

Fear that pesticides are inherently unsafe appears to be the motivation behind the motion before us today. Pesticides can be unsafe and that is why they must be carefully regulated. Thanks to the diligent efforts of Health Canada, only pesticides, where a careful scientific review raises no concerns for the health of people, animals and the environment, are allowed to be sold and used in Canada.

My hon. colleagues will soon be making some important points about Health Canada, the Pest Management Regulatory Agency, the new Pest Control Products Act and the government's rigorous insistence on health and safety. In the time available to me today, I will go into further detail on some of these ideas.

I will speak about the context. Sometimes it is worth restating the obvious, which I will do by pointing out that the PMRA, the Pest Management Regulatory Agency, is part of Health Canada. It is under the portfolio of the hon. Minister of Health, not Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, which was responsible for the regulation of pesticides prior to 1995. The agriculture and forestry sectors obviously have an intense interest in pest control products. There are critically important environmental, economic and trade issues at stake as well.

Ultimately, the most important questions revolve around human health. Do pesticides pose an unacceptable risk to the health of Canadians, in particular, children and other vulnerable subgroups? If the answer is yes, then these products may not be sold or used in Canada. It is as simple as that.

The point is that the PMRA will not gamble with the health and safety of Canadians. If there are unanswered doubts, if the science is inconclusive, the agency will always err on the side of caution. Let me add that pesticides, which are permitted in the Canadian market, can contribute directly to human health. For example, they reduce our exposure to a range of threats, including insects, bacteria, moulds and allergy inducing weeds.

How does the PMRA work? The mandate of the PMRA is to prevent unacceptable risks to people and the environment from the use of pesticides, whether manufactured in Canada or imported.

In reviewing submissions for new products, the agency brings to bear the best available science from Canada and around the world. As a result, our regulatory regime is widely regarded for its stringent adherence to tough, scientifically sound standards and evidence for health and safety.

Business of Supply

In assessing a submission, agency scientists evaluate a range of factors, including the effectiveness of a proposed product, its effect on health and the extent to which it might accumulate in the environment over time. Products that are registered and approved for sale are required to carry labelling information, with the appropriate warnings and directions for safe use.

However, I want to underline that the PMRA's job does not end when a product is approved for market. It is quite the opposite. The agency is in it for the long haul. It continues to monitor products once they are in use. That way, if new and unexpected hazards come to light, the PMRA can order the appropriate remedies.

At the same time, the agency also promotes the development and use of innovative pest management alternatives that reduce our reliance on chemicals. The idea is that the needs of Canadians today must be met in a manner that does not compromise the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

I would like to discuss the new PCPA. As effective as the PMRA is now, my government is making it even better. We expect that a new legislative and regulatory framework for pesticides will come into effect soon, strengthening the agency's capacity to safeguard the health of Canadians and the environment.

Among other things, the new Pest Control Products Act will require special protection for infants and children. This high level of protections is currently applied through policy. It will also take a more comprehensive view of pesticides that considers people's exposure from all possible sources, including food and water.

●(1045)

There are many other features of the new act that are worth mentioning, including an approach that explicitly favours lower risk products. For the first time ever, Canadians will also be able to consult a public registry, which contains detailed evaluation reports on pesticides sold in Canada. The act also extends the powers of the PMRA over products already on the market. For example, it will oblige pesticide companies to report any adverse health effects and it can take tough actions with companies that refuse to comply.

The hon. leader of the NDP is to be commended for raising his concerns about pesticide use. Indeed, we all share his reservations about the overuse of chemicals that can be toxic to people and the world around us.

The answer is not to ban all pesticides. If we did, we would be introducing more problems than we are solving. The solution is to control the use of lawn, garden and other chemicals, ensure that we permit only the safest products on the market, apply the toughest and most stringent rules on their use and continue to monitor them over the long haul, so if new risks turn up we can step in and address them.

That is why we have the PMRA and the Pest Control Products Act. That is why we are moving to make tough and effective regulatory systems even better.

I have faith in the system. I believe in its capacity to protect the safety of Canadians and the environment we all cherish, which is why I will not support the motion put forward by the hon. member opposite.

●(1050)

Hon. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have four quick questions for the member.

First, does the member believe there are no unhealthy pesticides on the market because PMRA does its job so we do not need the motion?

Second, if an insect infestation came to Canada, perhaps from a boat to a major city, and we could not use a pesticide, would the motion perhaps allow the infestation to move to our forests?

Third, the member talked about harmful insects or moulds. I am not totally convinced of this yet. Could the member give me examples of insects or moulds that are harmful and that we would be protected against if the motion passed?

Finally, is the NDP proposing a new method where companies have to prove that pesticides are safe? I prefer it when the government proves pesticides are safe by objective scientists. Is the member talking about a new method of evaluating pesticides?

Mr. Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, the member's question touches upon the concerns I have with the motion put forward by the member for Toronto—Danforth. I suggest the motion is overly broad.

The first question raised was the ability of PMRA to regulate products that were already on the market. Since 1995, there have been close to 550 active pesticide ingredients found in more than 7,000 products registered in Canada. Of these, 401 active ingredients were registered before 1995 and 53% of those active ingredients, or 213, have already been re-evaluated by Health Canada. This is done on an ongoing basis.

We have to have faith in Health Canada and our scientists. They are looking into these products.

In terms of his concerns about an overly broad motion hampering the safety of Canadians, the city of Toronto, the home of the hon. member who moved the motion, has a pesticide bylaw with a litany of exemptions.

It is somewhat hypocritical for the member for Toronto—Danforth to put forward a motion that is overly broad, one with which his own city would be uncomfortable. I will use an example of the gypsy moth. It is addressed by the pesticide, Btk, which is effectively used in Toronto. This is a reason why we must be cautious and concerned that we do not put in place a ban that would hamper the health of Canadians.

Ms. Denise Savoie (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member confuses exempted products and other more dangerous toxic chemicals.

Business of Supply

However, what can the hon. member tell us about the last Auditor General's report on PMRA as to the adequacy of its use of evaluations and norms, the adequacy of the evaluation of new products and the re-evaluation of old products?

Mr. Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, as far as previous pesticides introduced into the market prior to the stringent regulation in 1995, I mentioned that 53% have already been re-evaluated. There is a constant ongoing re-evaluation. Of the 401 pesticides, 213 have been re-evaluated. We need to have faith in Health Canada to do the re-evaluations. We also need to have faith in the public servants who give it their all.

Some members may question the dedication of the public servants in the Department of Health. I have faith in the system and its capacity to allow them to do their job in an excellent manner.

To register a new pesticide, more than 200 scientific studies must be conducted to determine if the product would cause any negative effects on people, animals, birds, insects and plants, as well as the soil and water. Canada has stringent rules. We should be proud of them.

Mr. Rick Norlock (Northumberland—Quinte West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, if not properly managed, pests can affect our quality of life in many different ways. Fungi or mould can cause a farmer's field of wheat to be unacceptable. Weeds can reduce that same farmer's yield by almost half. Spruce budworm and western beetles are wreaking havoc in many of Canada's forests. Mosquitoes can carry the risk of West Nile virus. No one wants cockroaches in their residences or bedbugs in their beds. Pests can represent a threat to public health and to the environment and can create significant negative impacts for our economy if they are not efficiently controlled.

As many members are aware, pesticides are products that are developed to control, destroy or inhibit the activities of pests. Some pesticide products are available for domestic or home use, while a larger number are available for commercial or restricted uses.

At the same time, pesticides differ from many other substances that enter our environment. They are not byproducts of another process but are intentionally used and released for specific purposes. The biological activity of most pesticides is what makes them valuable to Canadian society, while at the same time it means that the use and release of these products must be carefully regulated and controlled.

There can be risks associated with the use of pesticides. For this reason, pesticides are among the most rigorously tested and regulated substances in the world. In Canada, all pesticides are subject to the federal Pest Control Products Act. Under this act, pesticides must be approved and registered before sale or use in Canada.

It is Health Canada's Pest Management Regulatory Agency, the PMRA, that is responsible for administering this act. For a product to be approved, the health risks, the environmental risks and the value of the product must all be acceptable.

Before a new pesticide is registered, more than 200 scientific studies must be conducted to determine if the pesticide would cause any negative effects on people, animals, birds, insects and plants, as well as the soil and the water.

Detailed studies regulating possible adverse health effects must be carried out by industry, investigating effects that may result from acute, short term or chronic exposures. Studies are required to assess potential long term adverse effects on reproduction, development, the endocrine, nervous and immune systems, and the toxic effects such as cancer. All possible routes of exposure such as ingestion, deposit on the skin and inhalation are examined.

The PMRA requires and evaluates special studies that characterize the unique exposures of infants and children. These studies examine the potential effects of pesticide exposure on the pregnant mother, the fetus and the young child. Studies that consider the unique exposures of children include the minute exposure to residues in breast milk and in fruits and vegetables, as well as exposure through skin contact with treated surfaces while crawling or playing.

These studies are carefully evaluated by the PMRA scientists to ensure that the pesticide does not pose a health concern when used according to the label. Maximum residue limits, or MRLs, are set if pesticides are used on food crops. These limits ensure that the consumption of food, for a lifetime, does not pose a health concern. If the submitted data or any other relevant scientific evidence, including results of epidemiology studies, raise health concerns about the pesticides and its proposed use, the pesticide is not registered.

A similarly rigorous approach is taken to identify and evaluate the environmental risks of a pesticide. Health Canada scientists determine the fate of the pesticide in the environment and whether it will contaminate ground or surface waters such as lakes, streams and rivers. They also identify which species might be vulnerable to pesticides and which species are likely to be exposed under normal use conditions.

● (1055)

Toxicity studies are also required for a range of wildlife, including birds, fish and mammals, as well as beneficial organisms such as earthworms. The pesticide will not be registered if it poses a risk to the environment.

Finally, a pesticide must have value in order to be registered. It must be efficacious and the host or crop that is being protected from the pest must not be harmed by the pesticide. The efficacy studies allow Health Canada to ensure that only the lowest effective rate is allowed, thereby minimizing possible human and environmental exposure.

In 2001, following public consultation, the government implemented a new approach to re-evaluating older pesticides that first were marketed prior to 1995. This is to ensure that they meet modern standards. Health Canada's Pest Management Regulatory Agency has committed to complete the re-evaluation of these older pesticides by 2009.

Business of Supply

The new approach to re-evaluation has prioritized work by considering the pesticides used on crops and any identified health or environmental concerns. It makes maximum use of recent re-evaluations completed by other countries, particularly the U.S. This will permit the completion of the re-evaluation of older pesticides as soon as possible to ensure that Canadians' health and that of the Canadian environment continue to be protected.

It is important that everyone recognize that the regulation of pesticides is a shared responsibility with our provincial and territorial colleagues. A strong system of provincial and territorial legislation addresses the sale, transportation, storage, use and disposal of registered pesticides, taking into account provincial and territorial conditions and concerns.

The federal-provincial-territorial committee on pest management and pesticides brings together federal, provincial and territorial pesticide officials to exchange information and expertise and to provide advice and direction to governments on programs, policies and issues related to pesticides. Regulators at all levels work together toward the common goal of protecting Canadians from any risks posed by pesticides.

Health Canada's PMRA has also worked at the international level, actively cooperating with pesticides regulators around the world. Under NAFTA, there is close collaboration with the United States Environmental Protection Agency, also responsible for pesticide regulation. Some of the notable accomplishments include harmonizing data requirements, increased availability of lower risk products, the establishment of worker safety programs and the establishment of integrated pest management programs.

There is also a successful joint scientific review process for pesticides between Health Canada and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. This is a formal process with specific timelines in which the workload is divided between the two countries involved, the reviews of data are exchanged and a peer reviewed and cooperative risk assessment is undertaken, all with the goal of harmonized and simultaneous registration decisions in the two countries.

Canada also participates actively with both NAFTA partners as well as members of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development to ensure that standards for pesticides incorporate the latest scientific knowledge.

• (1100)

In closing, I would like to reiterate that we recognize the risks that can be associated with pesticides. This is why Canada's Pest Management Regulatory Agency stringently regulates pesticides in Canada, and we have full confidence in our regulatory system.

• (1105)

Ms. Denise Savoie (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I asked the member who spoke previously to this what he could tell us of Madame Gélinas' scathing report of PMRA's management of pesticides in Canada. I did not get an answer to my question.

I would like to ask the hon. member to tell us what he knows of Madame Gélinas' recent report on the handling of pesticides by Health Canada and PMRA.

Mr. Rick Norlock: Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned in my report to this place, there are over 200 stringent regulatory tests that occur in order for Health Canada, PMRA and other agencies to ensure the products they approve for use. It must be remembered that they approve these products for use if one uses them according to the label. It is very necessary, and indeed very prudent, for all of us to remind those who are going to use these products that they are approved for use provided one uses them according to the label.

I have every faith that the PMRA, Health Canada and other agencies are working very hard to ensure that these products are the safest possible products that we can possibly use.

Hon. Scott Brison (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise with pleasure today to support the amendment to the Pest Control Products Act in order to significantly limit the places where pesticides can be used legally in Canada.

In fact, when we introduced a similar bill in 2002, the purpose was to protect human health and safety, and the environment by regulating products used for the control of pests. The PCPA's primary objective was to prevent unacceptable risks to people in the environment from the use of pest control products. Ancillary objectives included supporting sustainable development to enable the needs of the present to be met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own.

This bill passed on June 13, 2002, and was given royal assent on December 12, 2002. It was sponsored by the Minister of Health and in fact replaced a 33 year old act first passed in 1969. It controls products commonly called pesticides, but it also encompasses a broad range of products including insecticides, herbicides, fungicides, algacides, insect repellents, wood preservatives, et cetera.

The development of the PCPA involved collaboration with the Pest Management Regulatory Agency of Health Canada, the Departments of Agriculture and Agri-Food, the Environment, Industry, Natural Resources and Fisheries and Oceans, Canada Food Inspection Agency, and industry stakeholders as well as broad consultations with environmental and health advocacy groups.

The result of their efforts demonstrated the way Canadians approach sustainable development in terms of policy, legislation and regulations. The bill protects human health, biodiversity, air, water and soil. It protects and promotes the interests of our agricultural industry to ensure a safe and abundant food supply at an acceptable cost, and the productivity of our natural forestry endowments by encouraging the move to the development and use of leading edge, sustainable pest management practices.

Business of Supply

The preamble of the bill states that the regulation of pesticides is to be pursued through a scientifically-based national registration system that addresses risks to human health and the environment both before and after registration. A new product will be approved or accepted only if there is reasonable certainty that there is no harm to human health, to future generations and to the environment under the conditions under which a pesticide has been approved.

The proposed amendments would strengthen the use of the precautionary principle that refines our views of what constitutes reasonable certainty. The precautionary principle applies in the current version of the PCPA and the principle asserts that a lack of full scientific certainty shall not be used as a reason for postponing cost-effective measures to prevent adverse health impacts or environmental degradation.

Science offers an evolving set of parameters within which we make decisions. Centuries ago our understanding of science allowed us, with reasonable certainty, to believe and act on an opinion, for instance, that the earth was flat. It would appear that some members in the Conservative Party continue to hold that view when it comes to environmental policy and other fairly arcane ideas about sustainable development.

We support the amendments which strengthen the approach in applying the precautionary principle. The amendments strengthen protection against possible exposure from multiple sources including food, water, home and school. By restricting the legal use of pesticides in specific locations, populations including pregnant women, children, farmers and their families would be protected from cumulative risks that would otherwise exist.

Due to their smaller size, diet and play habits, children are indeed more vulnerable to the harmful effects of pesticides than are adults. The existing bill recognizes this special vulnerability of children by calling for the application of an additional tenfold safety margin in evaluating a product's health risks. The amendments, as presented, would expand our protections to those in society most vulnerable to impacts.

The PCPA prohibits pesticides from being imported, sold and used unless they have been registered by the minister. Once registered, their use is carefully controlled. The minister may refuse to maintain an applicant registration where reporting requirements have in fact not been met.

• (1110)

This is an important protection for Canadians and for our agricultural sector as well. It creates the context for a race to the top among our agricultural sector positioning Canada as a leader in sustainable pest management.

[Translation]

Environmental policy can be used to create economic growth and opportunities. To do this, tax credits need to be put in place to attract capital and talent to promote research and development in environmental sciences and create a positive context for the marketing of this sort of technical and technological environment.

[English]

It was more than 20 years ago that Harvard professor Michael Porter, in assessing Canada's position in the global marketplace, described a robust regulatory regime for environmental and health protection as "technology forcing". In fact, it does help when there is multilateral cooperation between governments that not only require consumers and the private sector to develop better long term approaches to the environment, but also help create economic opportunity in doing so.

We have seen evidence of the ingenuity of our Canadian agricultural and forestry sectors to respond to health and environmental challenges with cutting edge pesticide management strategies. The sectors have adopted a "reduced risk" approach to pest management. Our agricultural sector has collaborated with Agriculture and Agri-Foods Canada developing an array of pest management strategies for priority crops and land uses. Some of these strategies create a brand for Canada, a brand in the use among global leaders of integrated sustainable pest management approaches.

[Translation]

Canada could become a world leader in this type of environmental technology, particularly with green technologies, green energy and clean energy, for example. There will be lots of opportunity in agriculture, for example, to develop biodiesel.

[English]

Some of these strategies, that the private sector and our agricultural and forestry sectors have developed, are actually breathtaking in their simplicity. In pear and apple orchards, which are an important ingredient in infant and child diets, pesticide use has decreased in favour of mating disruption techniques thus reducing the typically high pesticide load on this horticultural crop and strengthening the organic farming sector which is one of the faster growing sectors within horticulture.

Berry farmers have found the chemical controls for weevils to be ineffective, but the parasitic nematode used in a low temperature tolerance strain of berry has in fact produced results that have increased crop yields.

Canola and potato farmers, whose crops incur a 20% loss due to root maggot and wire worms, are using fungal parasites and meeting their pesticide use reduction goals at the same time.

There are new approaches to tillage to control weeds in oat, flax and wheat fields. This is contributing to new approaches to protecting waterfowl habitat, and soil and microbial damage and erosion.

Using pesticides before crops emerge helps to control weeds, deliver low health and environmental impacts, and reduce overall use of pesticides in the long term.

Business of Supply

Cattle ranchers know the blight of the leafy spurge, a non-indigenous species which impacts two million hectares of valuable grazing land and whose sap is toxic to cattle. Chemical treatment of these species is expensive and is inappropriate in terms of being close to water sources in those areas. Canadian farmers are using a biological control, the black spurge beetle, to reduce losses and increase productivity and innovation in their approaches.

By amending the bill and expanding the application of the precautionary principle, PCPA will protect human health and the environment and drive innovation, productivity and competitiveness in the agricultural and forestry sectors.

It is important to recognize that Canadians, not only from a short term health and safety perspective but from a long term environmental and economic sustainability perspective, understand the importance of these measures and in general environmental policy.

•(1115)

[Translation]

There is a lot of support throughout the country for environmental measures, especially in Quebec.

I would now like to talk about greenhouse gases. It is clear to everyone that Canada, as a multilateralist, has a responsibility to honour its commitments to the Kyoto protocol.

In addition, it is clear to everyone that the Conservative government does not support the principles of Kyoto.

[English]

It is also important to recognize that we have a huge credibility challenge right now as a country.

[Translation]

Indeed, we are the only country in the world reducing its environmental spending this year.

[English]

To be the only country in the world that is in fact reducing environmental investment this year is not the kind of club Canada wants to belong to.

In terms of Kyoto, we have a history as a country where we are respected internationally as a country that keeps its promises and respects its treaties. We have a responsibility to do more. There was a plan implemented by the previous Liberal government and that plan was working. Any plan takes time to have the effect required.

It has been often referred to that there was a growth in greenhouse gas emissions over the last 13 years of about 24%. It is also notable that during that period of time there was a GDP growth economically in Canada of about 45%, largely driven by some of the worst emitters, the fossil fuels petroleum industry. While technologies are evolving rapidly and importantly in those areas to clean energy production from traditional sources, we still have a long way to go.

[Translation]

This is why I think it will be very important for Canada to work with the other international partners to develop innovative technologies to reduce greenhouse gases and to create economic

opportunities at the same time. Canada could be a world leader in this area and create opportunities for young Canadians to earn a living. In addition, it will have an impact on industries such as green or clean energy, or alternative energies. There will be many opportunities.

In my opinion, this will be the 21st century's most dynamic sector. So, it is our responsibility as leaders in Canada and the responsibility of the government as well to play a leading role in this area.

•(1120)

[English]

It is embarrassing that we now have headlines such as the one in the Toronto Star this morning that the Minister of the Environment "lacks credibility; Rather than embarrass Canada, environment minister should stay away from UN meeting on climate change".

It is not the right kind of signal to be sending to the international community in terms of Canada's seriousness on these issues, that 300 non-governmental organizations from around the world charge at the meeting that the minister ought to step down from her role as chairperson. In fact, the 300 organizations that signed on to the ECO newsletter said the following:

Avoiding dangerous climate change clearly requires leadership from industrialized countries such as Canada in reducing emissions now and an agreement on deeper reductions for the second commitment period. If you feel, as Chair of these proceedings, that you and your government are not committed to fulfill your obligations under the Kyoto Protocol and that you cannot provide this needed leadership for the future, please, do the honourable thing. Step down.

That was the communication of 300 international non-government organizations in the environmental community directed to the Minister of the Environment on her chairpersonship of the Bonn conference.

It is important, whether in pesticide management or in measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, that we work multilaterally. Greenhouse gas emissions and other pollutants do not stop at borders. It is important that we work multilaterally, with the United States absolutely, but also with our partners through the Kyoto accord. The fact exists that in the U.S. private sector players are now seeking to put together a trading mechanism that can work because their government has not signed on to Kyoto. They recognize the efficacy of a trading system that would enable them not just to be competitive internationally but at the same time to build a cleaner greener planet.

Progress has been made within Canada with our private sector, with our oil and gas sector and in fact with our new energy sector. Wind farms are being built and are operating successfully in places in southern Alberta and also in places within Atlantic Canada. We are seeing the development of biofuels. That is good for the agricultural industry and traditional sectors. It is good for rural Canada. What is exciting about this is that some of the intractable regional and rural development issues and some of the intractable and difficult development issues with aboriginal communities can in fact be addressed through what quite possibly will be the fastest growing area in the 21st century economy and that is new energy and clean energy.

Business of Supply

They are not going to be putting wind farms on the corner of Bay and Bloor and they are not going to be developing biofuels on Bay Street either, but the fact is that a lot of these opportunities will provide sustainable economic opportunities to rural Canada, to aboriginal, first nations, Métis and Inuit communities, if we get it right.

[*Translation*]

To do this, tax credits must be put in place to attract capital, for example. There is a lot of international capital and many investors wanting to invest in this area.

Canada can become the world leader in this area.

[*English*]

It is that kind of vision that can recognize that we can create economic opportunity and it is directly out of environmental responsibility. I think a lot of Canadians in the private and public sectors, and Canadian consumers want to see that kind of leadership. I would urge all members of the House to pursue vigorously and in as non-partisan a way as we can in this quite partisan place, efforts to work together to ensure that Canada fulfills its international commitments but at the same time help create economic opportunities for future generations of Canadians by being environmentally responsible and innovative at the same time.

• (1125)

Ms. Denise Savoie (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member mentioned the importance of creating sustainable economic opportunities in Canada. He stated that with respect to the motion at hand there are new approaches, like biological controls and others, that are helping to create economic opportunities in farming. In fact in Victoria, the city that I represent, organic landscaping is one of the fastest growing sectors.

What does the member think of the Conservative members' faith that they seem to want to continue to place strictly in the chemical industry and to maintain the continued use of pesticides for cosmetic purposes?

Hon. Scott Brison: Mr. Speaker, first of all there is a role for the responsible use of pesticides. We all recognize that and I think the hon. member does as well.

I would hope that the Conservatives would understand that no one in the House is talking about a complete ban on pesticides. We are saying that as we have more information and more science in these areas, we should be using that science appropriately and responsibly to protect citizens and at the same time, as the member suggests and I agree with her, to create economic opportunities.

The organic farm movement is only part of it, but there have been significant opportunities created in that sector. In fact what has resulted in higher margin activity in terms of traditional agriculture, some of the organic farming has resulted in people are willing to pay more. The margins are better. It creates an agriculture opportunity that is more sustainable in some ways by being innovative and environmentally responsible at the same time. There is a growing demand internationally for these kinds of products as well.

As globalization continues, it is going to be increasingly important for Canada to play a role as a multilateral leader in these areas and

work with other jurisdictions, including the United States, toward common approaches in some of these areas, including pesticide use, with both the EU and the United States. I would assert that Canada can play a leadership role in moving toward a greater level of cooperation on the regulatory side such that our farmers are not subject to discriminatory practices through the use of one pesticide or the non-use of another. At the same time internationally all governments, all agriculture sectors in every country should cooperate in a way that citizens are protected and economic opportunity is not limited but is created by this kind of approach.

Mr. Laurie Hawn (Edmonton Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague's speech was on Kyoto. I had thought this motion was about pesticides but I guess it is not possible to talk about that for 20 minutes.

I thank him for highlighting his government's utter failure to meet our environmental commitments in 13 years, but I would like to get back to the topic at hand, at the risk of staying on topic, and that is pesticides.

I would like to ask the hon. member what his government's approach was to the assessment and evaluation of various pesticides, perhaps the relative success or failure, and what he would recommend going forward in terms of the assessment and evaluation of these products.

• (1130)

Hon. Scott Brison: Mr. Speaker, in 2002 similar legislation was passed and given royal assent. I almost said rural assent, I guess given the nature of the topic and the nature of my riding. I am very proud to represent my rural Nova Scotia riding of Kings—Hants. Beyond that the legislation required an evaluation period and implementation was to have occurred in 2005. The evaluation within the departments was continuing.

I would urge the government to support the direction of that legislation, to accelerate the testing process, while being reasonable from a scientific perspective, and to implement the legislation fully. It is already there. This motion strengthens it, but the legislation is already there. It received royal assent in 2002 and was to be implemented in 2005. There is still testing going on.

I would urge the government to conclude that testing and to move forward with this from a directional and effective perspective.

Mr. Rick Norlock (Northumberland—Quinte West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I was listening intently to the hon. member when he was discussing in particular the use of alternates to pesticides. I wondered where he was going with some of the other comments near the end of his speech, in particular his conversion from conservatism to so-called liberalism and then his conversion from Kyoto being on the back of a napkin to how wonderful and beautiful and everything around it is now.

Speaking of conversions, I listened intently to some of his statements with regard to alternatives to pesticides. Having used parasitic nematodes in my garden and having looked at alternate plant species, I wonder if he knows from his riding or from his personal experience how effective or sometimes ineffective some of these alternatives are.

Business of Supply

Hon. Scott Brison: Mr. Speaker, first, I welcome the hon. member to the House. He has not been here that long. In my experience as a member of Parliament, I do not have time to grow a garden and I think he will probably find the same thing once he gets settled in. It is a pretty busy life, so he may not be able to further that experience. I certainly do not have personal experience in terms of my gardening prowess. I was elected first in 1997 and I am lucky if I have a chance to buy groceries.

The member mentioned my position on Kyoto and I appreciate that very much. The fact is I have always believed in the science behind climate change and the importance of addressing it. I was opposed to ratification before there was a plan. The Liberal government implemented a plan that was working, so now I am opposed to a Conservative government that is dismantling that plan. In fact, I am always opposed to the lack of a plan when it comes to addressing environmental issues and my position has remained absolutely consistent on this.

I also believe in what is neither a left-wing nor right-wing perspective but just a good idea, that economic opportunity can be created through environmentally sustainable and responsible approaches. The fact is it is not a left-wing idea to attract capital to Canada through tax and regulatory changes that make Canada the best place to develop green technologies. It is not a right-wing idea either. It is a good idea. It is a Liberal idea, in fact.

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis (Winnipeg North, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to see that the Liberal leadership candidate is supporting the NDP initiative, which is long overdue, as I think he and others have acknowledged in the House. I want to ask him whether or not he is able to say with any certainty if other members in his party also support this initiative.

It was not too long ago that the NDP tried to persuade his party, then the government, to make significant changes to the Pest Control Products Act and was unsuccessful. There was huge opposition from the Liberals at the time.

I refer to Bill C-53, which was debated in 2002. The New Democratic Party clearly referenced the fact that the bill missed the mark in terms of controlling, regulating and prohibiting pesticides that were used for cosmetic purposes and were very dangerous on a health basis.

I want to know if the position he has taken today is a change of heart on the part of Liberals. Can he say with any certainty that there will be 100% backing from his caucus for this important initiative?

• (1135)

Hon. Scott Brison: Mr. Speaker, today's NDP motion was in fact consistent with the legislation that the Liberal government passed and which was given royal assent in 2002. In 2005 it was scheduled to have been implemented fully. There is still testing and work being done within the departments in that direction. I would urge the Conservatives to conclude those and to move forward.

While it may move further than the initial legislation, because there have in fact been changes in the science around that, it is consistent with the original legislation which was introduced by a Liberal government and presumably supported by the New Democrats.

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The member is misleading the House. Bill C-53 did not ban pesticides for cosmetic purposes. He has suggested—

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member does not have a point of order. She may have something she wants to continue to debate with the hon. member.

[*Translation*]

Resuming debate. The hon. member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie.

Mr. Bernard Bigras (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleague from the NDP be patient. I fully agree with her on the substance. The bill that was presented by the Liberal party moves too far away from the spirit of this motion.

That said, I am pleased to speak on this NDP opposition day. This motion, moved by the leader of the NDP, the hon. member for Toronto—Danforth, has just launched an important debate on the entire issue of using and transporting pesticides. Naturally, this is an issue that concerns many Quebeckers and Canadians.

However, when we look at the substance of the motion presented by the party opposite, we realize that it will allow for significant abuse and considerable interference in provincial jurisdictions. It is not that Ottawa does not have a chance to take action in its own jurisdiction. However, by virtue of this shared authority over the environment, the federal government is far from being able to take action involving the banning, transport or use of pesticides.

In the Standing Committee on the Environment and Sustainable Development we had a chance to examine Bill C-53 in 2002. I had a chance to speak in this House about that bill. I took that opportunity to make the point that the federal government does indeed have a responsibility when it comes to pesticides. But this responsibility stops at registering and reassessing pesticides. It is the provinces that are responsible for the transport, sale, use, storage and elimination of pesticides. The provincial governments are also responsible for training and permits, and restrictions regarding the use of pesticides. The municipalities also have a responsibility with respect to the regulations on municipal land only.

Accordingly, this jurisdiction over pesticides is shared among the federal government, which is responsible for their registration and use, the provinces, which are responsible for the transport, use and handling of pesticides and for issuing permits, and the municipalities, which are responsible for regulations, including one category in particular, those having to do with municipal land. The municipalities do indeed have a responsibility, but let us never forget that under our Constitution the municipalities answer to the provinces.

Business of Supply

Regarding the substance, I have to say that the motion contains principles we support. First, there is the principle of precaution. We have always believed that this principle had to be included in the PCPA in Canada. Second, this four part motion, this very long motion moved by the NDP, provides that the PCPA should ban certain uses, including in the home and on the land surrounding it and in hospitals and schools as well as on land located nearby.

The substance and the spirit of the NDP's motion are good and commendable. However, it must be recognized that this motion is asking Ottawa to meddle in areas of provincial jurisdiction.

In this regard, I give Quebec as an example. In 1987, it passed legislation on pesticides. We passed this legislation aimed at reducing the use of certain pesticides and at protecting public health and safety.

● (1140)

In 1987, Quebec was proactive and decided to establish its own law.

In 1998, to ensure the law was up to date and responded to public concerns over health and the environment, broad consultations were undertaken in Quebec to revise the legislation. The result was that in 1998 and 2002, in particular, a task force made 15 recommendations in Quebec aimed at better governing the use of our pesticides in Quebec.

So Quebec formulated for itself one of the most innovative laws in the world, by incorporating in the existing legislation a pesticide management code amending section 11 of Quebec's pesticide act. This amendment in fact provided for the ban—sought by the NDP—on the use of pesticides on public land and spaces, be they early childhood centres, schools or hospitals. In 2002, Quebec adopted these amendments to the act in order to protect our children, the public and our seniors from what we consider unwarranted use.

As a result, we modified section 11 of the pesticides act to integrate this pesticide management code. The first part of the code came into force in 2003. The second part of the code just came into force in 2006. The purpose was to ensure that pesticides would not be used in public places.

I would like to mention a few of the elements provided for in the code we adopted: we banned the use of the most toxic pesticides on grassy areas in public, semi-public and municipal greenspaces; we banned the use of nearly all pesticides in and around early childhood centres and elementary and high schools, which is exactly what the NDP motion calls for; we created a specific regulation governing the use of certain pesticides that are still authorized; and we banned certain aerosol treatments inside buildings.

This shows that Quebec has decided to take on its responsibilities in its areas of jurisdiction. I have nothing against the government in Ottawa intervening in the pesticide issue, but it should intervene where things are going wrong.

The use of pesticides is not a problem in Quebec because they have already been banned around early childhood centres and in public spaces. Today, the NDP should have introduced a motion to accelerate the re-evaluation of pesticides currently on the market. In 1999, the NDP should have responded to recommendations made by

the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development when she said that pesticides on the market contained many active ingredients that had not been re-evaluated.

What the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development said in 1999 spoke volumes. She said that of the 500 active ingredients in pesticides on the market, 300 were approved before 1989 and another 150 before 1960. This means that there are pesticides that have not been re-evaluated for many years and are therefore still on the market.

Why should we ask the federal government to increase its responsibility for pesticides by banning their use on public lands and in hospitals and schools—which, as far as I know, are provincial responsibilities—when it cannot even do its job in its own jurisdiction?

● (1145)

Action was needed on re-evaluation and registration. In addition, the motion should have proposed faster registration of biological control agents in order to make pesticide alternatives available on the market.

Canada lags far behind the United States in registering biological control agents. Registration is still a federal responsibility.

According to the latest figures I have seen, only 35 biological control agents are sold in Canada, under 150 product names, whereas in the United States, 175 biological control agents are available on the market under 7,000 product names, offering an alternative to pesticides.

We would have liked to pass a motion today asking the federal government to amend the act or take the necessary steps to expedite re-evaluation, starting with pesticides on the market that were approved in 1960 and no longer meet our health protection and environmental protection criteria. I am stressing this because it was one of the main conclusions reached by the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development: some pesticides currently available on the market no longer meet these criteria.

Today, the Bloc Québécois is being asked to vote for a motion that will tell Quebec how to go about prohibiting pesticides in public spaces, when we have had a law in effect since 2006. The motion seeks to impose this on Quebec, when Ottawa is not doing its job. It makes no sense.

Quebec takes an innovative approach to environmental protection. When we passed our first law in 1987, it was not perfect, of course. We can recall the debates we had at the time about pesticides. But whenever possible, Quebec set up a task force or focus group and modernized its laws to prohibit pesticide use on its territory.

Business of Supply

Essentially, this motion does not respect the provinces' areas of jurisdiction. It seeks to impose something on Quebec, to open wide the door to interference in provincial jurisdictions. As well, it is important to remember that if Quebecers had not wanted to bring about better pesticide regulation, we very likely would not be at this point today.

I would remind the House that it was a Parti Québécois government in Quebec that established this pesticide management code, which is considered one of the most innovative. However, Quebec did not stop at simply declaring bans in its pesticide management code. It also decided to train the individuals who handle such substances. It was decided that Quebec workers needed training to handle such products, especially workers who at times must use potentially dangerous substances, even those which do not appear on the list of hazardous materials.

• (1150)

The instructions and codes of practice for these products must be properly followed in order to ensure that our citizens are not overexposed to such substances.

In Quebec, not only did we decide to ban substances that are dangerous to human health in public spaces, but even when such substances are not necessarily banned—not everything can be banned—training was planned for everyone who handles such substances. Thus, we made training a priority in Quebec.

We would add that, in spite of everything—aside from banning—among other things, alternative solutions must be found. Specifically, I am referring to organic farming. As for the particulars of organic farming, we note that European governments have made choices very different from ours. In terms of technology and training, Europe is the recognized leader. Investing in research to promote organic farming is considered value added to a product. If we decide to give technical training to our farmers so that they could move from one form of farming to another, this is not an economic constraint. On the contrary, these products have added value that is increasingly in demand around the world.

We have had the example of Roundup Ready wheat, a genetically modified wheat. Our Asian partners told us that if we approved Roundup Ready wheat they would no longer purchase Canadian wheat. The Canadian Wheat Board had to send a very clear message to the government that, despite its possible alliances with major multinationals such as Monsanto, it would lead to significant losses of market share.

We want our agricultural sector to be increasingly organic, and to use, and desire to use, fewer and fewer pesticides. This should be echoed by our governmental authorities through the development of strict guidelines by the organic agriculture sector at Agriculture Canada. We have waited too long. We in Canada should be ashamed when comparing ourselves to the Europeans, in terms of subsidies, for example.

I just spoke of the investment in training and technology for farmers in European countries. We should also be ashamed of the fact that Canada does nothing to financially assist its organic growers. On the contrary, we have a government and a Canadian Food Inspection Agency that prefer to side with Monsanto to lend

genetic material and establish partnerships with major multinationals to develop products that are genetically engineered. And then they try to tell us that the Canadian Food Inspection Agency is an independent agency.

In summary, in terms of registration and re-evaluation, there are significant shortcomings in current federal programs. Ottawa should restrict itself to acting in its areas of jurisdiction by expediting the re-evaluation of products on the market since 1960, and concentrating on the registration of biological control agents. It should not interfere with the provinces, such as Quebec, that have up-to-date legislation and pesticide management codes. This is how we will make headway and protect both the health and the environment of Quebecers and Canadians.

• (1155)

[*English*]

Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I agree with about 95% of what the member said. I understand why he is proud of what Quebec has done to provide leadership around this issue. My leader, the member for Toronto—Danforth, also began his speech, when he launched this debate today on this very important motion, by expressing his pride in his native town of Hudson. If I may be permitted to also be parochial about it, Halifax, the city that I am proud to represent, is the second city in the country that actually saw fit to take the action that is now put before us for consideration.

I really have a hard time and I am pleading with the member to address what seems to me a fundamental contradiction. He has spoken about the fact that many European countries have done far better than Canada in dealing with lethal pesticides, understanding that these are lethal for people's health and unnecessary because there are alternatives.

The reality is that many European countries have been prodded and pushed because of the leadership of the European Union very often around these issues.

How is it that this member can speak with such pride about the leadership shown by the province of Quebec? Yet he turns his back on the fact that there are children, frail residents, and vulnerable elderly people in other parts of the country who will continue to suffer and pay a price, and be punished because of the failure for us to adopt these kinds of standards on a nation-wide basis.

Is it the case that because this member is a member from Quebec, that has decided to erect firewalls around the progressive measures, that he basically feels no problem at all about completely turning his back on Canadians in other parts of the country that deserve the same kind of important protections that would flow from adopting these measures Canada wide?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Bernard Bigras: Mr. Speaker, not at all. The proof of our compassion and solidarity toward seniors rests in the fact that Quebec has adopted a pesticide management code. Yes, this was adopted in Quebec.

Business of Supply

I invite my colleague from the NDP to speak to her colleagues from the rest of Canada as well. The reality is that before we can even discuss banning, there are still products that are hazardous to health that we are unable to identify. This identification is the responsibility of the federal government.

Quebec still has problems. Why? Because Ottawa is not doing its job. Even if a province like Quebec wants to impose a strict code on managing pesticides, if we do not have clear identification of the 7,000 products on the market, this province will be incapable since reassessment and registration are not complete. For example, Europe is taking the REACH approach for toxic substances. This approach is a strict model for managing toxic substances.

I am prepared to work with my colleague to ensure that Canada adopts strict registration and reassessment criteria. When Ottawa takes care of its jurisdictions, this has repercussions on Quebec in terms of the application of the pesticide management code. This needs to be taken care of first in order to prevent major legal disputes. I am certain that my colleague would like cooperation and a good partnership in Canada and not a unilateral rule imposed on the provinces when Ottawa is not taking care of its own jurisdiction.

• (1200)

[English]

Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am proud of the fact that the NDP has introduced this motion today. It reminds me of a similar significant initiative that we undertook a couple of years ago, and that was our motion on trans fats that was approved by the House. We did that, as we do this today, on the basis of responding to the significant concerns in Canada about public health, about the impact on people's personal health of the use of pesticides and trans fats.

I am proud of the fact that the NDP has taken a very strong approach here and is in effect calling for a ban of non-essential cosmetic pesticides.

I would think it would be an initiative that the member from the Bloc would welcome. There is nothing in this motion that undermines what the province of Quebec has done. In fact, on the contrary. We should be celebrating that this has happened in Quebec and saying, "Let's see this happen in the rest of Canada".

From that point of view, it is very disappointing that the member did not respond to the question raised by the member for Halifax. I think what is being said here is that there are no boundaries in the air that we breathe and the chemicals that we ingest. We all want a good quality of life. We all share this planet. Therefore, in this federal jurisdiction, surely, the most significant thing we can do is to bring forward something like this to build on what has taken place in Quebec. I would expect to see these members supporting an initiative that would ensure that what has happened in Quebec would take place in other jurisdictions across the country.

We know that over 100 municipalities have adopted pesticide bylaws. We know that the province of Quebec has done that as well. Let us see this right across Canada. What is wrong with that, for heaven's sake?

[Translation]

Mr. Bernard Bigras: Mr. Speaker, if my colleague proposes to make a constitutional change, that is her right. However, I do not think that that is what the NDP wants, unless it tells us so clearly. If that is the case, so be it.

I would nevertheless ask my colleague to read the Constitution. She will see that the municipalities come under the provinces. I find it strange today that the NDP should be so sanctimonious and want to lecture Quebec, when it has beside it and before it a government and an opposition party that have done nothing in recent years—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Bernard Bigras: Mr. Speaker, I would ask my colleague to show some respect for me.

[English]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Andrew Scheer): I would ask the member for Winnipeg Centre to allow the member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie to continue with his response.

[Translation]

Mr. Bernard Bigras: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Quebec has had some very good results in the struggle against pesticides. It is regrettable that the NDP should try to lecture my political party and Quebec as a whole, when a government party is not concerned about the matter, and an official opposition party did not inject the necessary funds in order to protect re-evaluation.

We are part of a system that has responsibilities. Quebec has clearly shown that it takes its responsibilities. Ottawa must act now. We expect it to do so quickly.

• (1205)

[English]

Mr. Bruce Stanton (Simcoe North, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I welcome my colleague's intervention today in respect of this important issue and I certainly concur with him in respect of jurisdiction.

We see that this is an important piece of federal responsibility with respect to the control of these products. Clearly, when we get into areas respecting how products should be applied, particularly as it respects land use and parcels of land and property, these come under provincial and/or municipal type jurisdiction.

It is an added advantage where provinces and municipalities can find ways to work together with their federal counterparts, for example, in the areas of urban lawn care. All governments have worked together on these issues.

The member raised an interesting question with regard to the re-evaluation process and the fact that it could perhaps be speeded up. Given the fact that there are 401 of these ingredients that were registered prior to 1995, more than a majority of them have already been in fact re-evaluated. I would be interested in his comments on how he would see this being sped up.

Business of Supply

[Translation]

Mr. Bernard Bigras: Mr. Speaker, first of all, the necessary means must be given to the PMRA, the agency whose mandate is to re-evaluate the active ingredients in pesticides.

I recall very clearly, during the study of Bill C-53, which gave rise to the Pest Control Products Act, PMRA officials told us that a legislative approach was required to shorten the length of time. So it is possible to shorten the length time under the Pest Control Products Act.

However, as with so many of the acts that we pass here, the financial resources do not follow. That is a problem. We find ourselves unable to conduct this re-evaluation, as necessary as it is. It is actually being demanded not only by citizens who wish to have a better environment and better health, but also by manufacturers who wish to see the length of time shortened.

The PMRA must therefore be given the resources so that it can do its work and thus protect Quebecers and Canadians.

[English]

Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am please to have the opportunity to join in the debate on the NDP's opposition day motion.

First, let me recognize and pay tribute to the member for Toronto—Danforth, the leader of the NDP, who tabled the motion. It was very fitting that he was the leadoff speaker. He has a long history in Toronto municipal politics in being the champion of this issue, coming from the very municipality that was the first in Canada to take the step of banning the use of cosmetic and non-essential pesticides. It has been a very important part of his career to date.

I will be splitting my time, Mr. Speaker, with the member for Winnipeg North.

I will begin my remarks with a shocking statistic. Our children now have a fifty-fifty chance of getting cancer. It was not always that way. In fact, it was only in the post-war years that the use of chemicals grew exponentially. Correspondingly we know now it is no coincidence that there is a direct causal link of many cancers to that exponential growth in the use of chemicals.

For years now, as the incidence of cancer has increased, we have struggled with this. I do not know of a family who has not been touched by cancer. More often than not, we are told by the medical community and the establishment that we probably got cancer because of something we did. Perhaps it is our lifestyle, or perhaps we have been a smoker or we do not exercise enough. Those are true, but we have to consider as well the environmental factors, beyond the control of most Canadians, but within the control of members of Parliament, which are adding and contributing to this alarming incidence of diseases.

Let me be clear, our motion today does not deal with agricultural use of pesticides. It does not interfere with herbicides used by farmers or any other commercial application. We are trying to address the decorative, non-essential use of pesticides which represents about 40% of all the pesticides used. Of the 200 million kilograms of chemical pesticides used per year, about 40% is in that

category of non-essential, decorative, cosmetic lawns and gardens, golf courses, et cetera. It is unnecessary.

When it comes to pregnant women and children, who are the most vulnerable to the effects of chemicals, surely the precautionary principle must prevail. Up until now, the burden of proof has been on us to show beyond any doubt that a specific chemical causes a specific cancer. It is an impossible test. It is a bit of a mug's game because no one is able to do that given the compounding effect of the many chemicals to which we are exposed. On that basis, the chemical companies have been allowed to continue to sell these products to the point where they are ubiquitous.

Our initiative reverses that burden of proof. It calls for an absolute moratorium on all non-essential, decorative, cosmetic uses of pesticides on Earth Day, April 22 of next year, until such time that each individual chemical manufacturer can come forward and prove to us beyond any reasonable doubt that its product is absolutely safe. Why should we have to prove that its product is hurting us? Why does it not have to prove that its product is absolutely safe? The burden of proof is turned upside down and stood on its head.

Some would argue that there already is a regulatory agency that takes care of the regulation of dangerous chemicals. We argue that the current regulatory regime has been woefully inadequate. For instance, 2,4-D was just recently reaffirmed as an okay chemical to use. I have a report here from the *Journal of Paediatrics and Child Health*, published two weeks ago, that overwhelmingly makes the causal link between 2,4-D of not only childhood cancers but also of neurological and developmental disorders and other health conditions.

● (1210)

We know enough now that the precautionary principle should kick in and make every member of Parliament nod their heads. We have to stop this. We have to stop soiling our own nest and contaminating our environment to the point where our children are being exposed. We know enough about early childhood development to know that their little brain cells have thinner walls than ours and that they are much more vulnerable to contamination by the exposure rates. The threshold limits for adults are 10 to 20 times higher than they should be for children. It is children who are exposed by tumbling around on the front lawn.

Over 50% of childhood exposure to pesticides is actually in the house. Chemical agents bond with molecules of dirt and get tracked into the home where they get circulated and recirculated for a much longer lifespan than that same chemical would have if it were left out in the open.

Therefore, we believe this issue is common sense. We have to look at the other contributing factors to our public health. Above and beyond taking care of ourselves and watching what we eat and quitting smoking, we also have to take steps to protect us from environmental contaminations.

Business of Supply

Anyone who saw the recent television show on CBC with Wendy Mesley could not help but be moved at the compelling argument she made and how shocked she was at the pervasive nature of chemical exposure and how little regulation there really was. It is almost as if we are interfering with the chemical companies' right to market products if we question them.

Chemical companies are not necessarily our friends in terms of our public health. Their business is to sell product. They do that very capably and have very powerful lobbies to try to stop anyone who may have the temerity to suggest their product is not healthy.

I have seen Wendy Mesley's show repeated three or four times now. She makes the argument, better than I have ever heard, that we have to put the brakes on this. We are irresponsible if we do not do all we can to minimize the exposure, especially of children. We have to do something about the alarming statistic that 50% of our kids will get cancer. That in itself should stop us dead in our tracks.

I know we are going to get pushed back from the chemical companies. Believe me, I have been getting it already in my office. However, I will point out specifically the fault we find with the current health assessment practices of the PMRA, the Pest Management Regulatory Agency.

The PMRA relies basically on animal toxicity studies and human exposure estimates. Many of these studies are never peer reviewed from a scientific point of view. I am not a scientist, but I do understand these studies should be reviewed. Moreover the extrapolation from studies on rats may not be as valid as formerly thought. We now know that rats have genes that do not exist in people, which detoxify chemicals differently than what people do. If we are measuring toxicity and threshold limits in rats, it is not as applicable to humans as we once thought. It is certainly not applicable to children who recent research has shown absorb and are susceptible to contamination by chemicals at a far greater rate than we originally believed.

It has been pointed out that over 90 municipalities, and I believe it is now over 100 municipalities, have already taken these important steps, including the city of Toronto and the city of Halifax. However, many other municipalities and cities have tried and failed, for example the city of Ottawa. Ottawa city council tried for three years to get the cosmetic use of pesticides banned. It was overwhelmed by a forceful lobby from the pro-pesticide use community. The vote failed just recently. It was lost by one vote. Therefore, Ottawa is not protected.

This is why it is appropriate for the federal government to intervene, within its jurisdiction at the regulatory level, to reverse the onus and protect the communities that do not have the wherewithal to fight the lawsuits and the aggressive lobby by the chemical companies.

For the rest of Canadians who are not already protected by their own municipal bylaws, the House of Commons could take action and make this a blanket universal protection. I dearly hope that members of Parliament see fit to do so, whether their own communities are covered or not.

●(1215)

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I listened to the member's remarks and I think he should look at the pesticide issue in Ottawa. Ottawa tried to impose a bylaw. The mayor had to call a rural-urban summit last fall. The farmers were outraged because they cannot have the same laws applied to them in terms of what they are doing in their fields to control weeds with herbicides, pesticides and fungicides in order to grow a high quality crop.

My concern with this motion is that the federal government, through the exercise of the motion, would basically provide blanket treatment across the country, and I think it would cause untold difficulties for the farm sector. The motion mentions that it does not apply to farms, but there will be instances where it does. I see this as a great problem.

How is the member going to ensure that this does not shut down our production base, that it does not make it difficult for us to produce in a way such that we would not have disease and moulds in some of our crops?

Mr. Pat Martin: Mr. Speaker, I did deal with this very issue the other day on P.E.I. CBC Radio, I believe, when I introduced my bill to ban pesticides. It is true that the agricultural community is concerned that if we ban the use of pesticides for the cosmetic use, it may mean that the manufacturers are less able to provide a sufficient amount of product and their profit margins would be impacted et cetera.

I do not accept that. I am willing to err on the side of caution once again, because our motion specifically says that it does not affect the agricultural or commercial use of pesticides. It is only the non-essential cosmetic use that we are targeting. We are not trying to interfere with the agricultural community although we wish agriculture was not so heavily dependent on pesticides. In my home province of Manitoba, I know that it is difficult to get crop insurance if farmers are unwilling to stipulate that they will use x number of units per acre of pesticides, herbicides et cetera.

There is one thing that I will add. Homeowners lay it on too heavy. Farmers might lay on one litre of herbicide per acre. A homeowner may lay on one litre per front yard. It is also the irresponsible use of non-professionals that the bill would affect.

●(1220)

Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the member for Winnipeg Centre answered that question very well in terms of the agricultural industry. I am sure that on another day we can have another debate about what we need to do there in terms of looking at alternatives and organic farming and looking at the agricultural sector, but today we are focused on the cosmetic use of pesticides.

Business of Supply

I think the motion establishes two very important principles that I would like to ask the member to talk about. One he has already mentioned, and that is reversing the burden of proof. That is very important in terms of public policy. It has been up to individuals and organizations to challenge what is going on and to show that something is unsafe. Now the burden of proof would be on the manufacturers to show that if they want a product to come into use they have to be able to demonstrate that it is safe.

The second important principle is that of reducing exposure. We know there is a huge amount of evidence to say that exposure to all of these chemicals and pesticides is dangerous. It is ironic that we send kids out to play and to the playground to get fresh air and get them outside, yet we are sending them into a risk zone. I would like to ask the member to address that issue of reducing exposure.

Mr. Pat Martin: Mr. Speaker, it is true that the most commonly used weedkiller, 2,4-D, which has just recently been put back on the list of chemicals that are okay to use, has just been persuasively linked, according to the journal *Paediatrics and Child Health*, to cancer, neurological impairment and reproductive problems in all kinds of people, mostly children. That is shocking.

We have an obligation to reduce the exposure. If that means that our parks, our playgrounds and our golf courses have less chemicals, we have to do that.

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis (Winnipeg North, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to have a chance to speak on this important motion introduced by the NDP dealing with banning pesticides when they are used for cosmetic purposes.

I too want to join with my colleague from Winnipeg Centre and acknowledge the work of our leader, the member for Toronto—Danforth, in spearheading this initiative before us today and to thank him for his leadership on the matter.

While I am at it, let me recognize the work of the member for Winnipeg Centre, who just a little while ago introduced a private member's bill in this House, Bill C-225, which would do precisely what this motion before us attempts to do, and that is to place a moratorium on the use of pesticides when it comes to caring for our lawns and flowerbeds and when we are talking about cosmetic purposes.

I want to start by referencing an earlier remark made by the member for Kings—Hants, a member of this House who was once a Conservative and then a Liberal and is now an aspiring candidate for the Liberal leadership, and who cannot seem to get his facts straight and is reflecting what I think is a very inconsistent message from Liberals on this issue. That, of course, has to do with attempts by this Parliament for many years to try to get such a ban.

The issue before us is not a new one. It has been discussed in this House and at committee many times. Let me go back to when I was first elected in 1997. I can recall all kinds of correspondence and promises by the Liberal government of the time to deal with it. I know that there were previous private members' motions and bills placed before the House on this matter on a regular basis.

The most recent opportunity we had to actually deal with this issue in a decisive way was back in 2002, when the Pest Control Products Act was up for review before the health committee and this

Parliament. At that time, it was recognized that the legislation, which came into effect in 1969, was out of date, old fashioned, had not kept pace with the tremendous influx of pesticides and toxic substances in our marketplace and had to be refined and reviewed.

At that time, the Liberal government of the day in fact promised a massive overhaul, promising that it would bring this legislation into the modern century and address numerous concerns that had been raised by experts in the health field and by individual citizens who had felt the most serious ramifications from pesticides in terms of their own health and well-being. At that time, the legislation that was introduced did not in fact bring forward a ban on pesticides.

This is contrary to what we have just heard from the member for Kings—Hants, who is running for the leadership of the Liberal Party and does not seem to have his facts correct once again. He seems to have gotten himself mixed up first on the income trust issue and now he is not clear about pesticides. I think it is about time that he did some homework and in fact recognized what kind of record the party of which he is now a member has on issues like pesticides. Perhaps when he made the leap from the Conservatives to the Liberals he had not really studied just how good Liberals are at pretending they are going to deal with something but never actually getting down to it.

Goodness knows how many times we have heard in this House from Liberals about how they were going to crack down on pesticides and take up the challenge of banning these substances from use on a cosmetic basis. How many times have we heard that? How many times have Canadians believed that?

Where are we today? There is no ban on pesticides for cosmetic purposes. There was nothing in Bill C-53 in the year 2002, many years after this issue had been discussed on numerous occasions in the House and many years after definitive scientific research was available for all of us to use. Not only was that piece missing from the Liberal bill, the government of the day would not entertain any motions to change the bill to that effect.

●(1225)

On this side of the House in the New Democratic Party, we tried very hard to get Bill C-53 amended to ban pesticides in terms of cosmetic use. No, sir, there was nothing doing by the Liberals at the time, just like so many other issues that we were dealing with at the health committee and on every other level.

So here we are today, years after this issue was raised, years after many Canadians have had to suffer through the worst effects of the toxins found in pesticides today, and we are at square one. We are trying to do something very civilized, humane, practical, common-sensical and realistic and simply ban the use of pesticides when it comes to cosmetic or decorative purposes.

We are not talking about agriculture at the moment, although of course there are a lot of things we should be doing on that front in terms of trying to give citizens the right to know what is being used, in terms of trying to apply the precautionary principle so that disastrous products are not allowed on the market and the health of human beings and animals comes first.

Business of Supply

However, today we are talking just about lawns and flowerbeds and banning pesticides that are very toxic and harmful to human beings. Back when we debated this issue in 2002, we heard incredible testimony from individuals and organizations about the dangers that pesticide use in urban areas caused. We heard how the impact on human health is severe and profound and could lead to fetal damage and to long term physical health problems for individuals, particularly those already sensitive to chemicals and other foreign substances. The evidence was in at the time, and it is in today before us.

We are all hoping that finally we can all come together and deal with the issue once and for all, that we can make up for lost ground and years of inaction by Liberals. Perhaps members on the Conservative side, the Conservative government, who sat through those years watching the Liberals on the health committee as they refused to entertain important amendments, are now prepared to actually join forces, make up for the inadequacies of the previous government and do something substantive, concrete and real for Canadians.

I want to refer to the fact that numerous constituents have written to me on this issue, just like other members of Parliament have mentioned. On a regular basis we get e-mails such as the one I just received from Colin McInnes in my riding. He said, "I am writing to let you know that I fully support...[the] private member's bill [introduced by the member for Winnipeg Centre] to limit the use of cosmetic pesticides...". He urges me to take whatever action I can.

I want to refer to Barry Hammond, who over the years has written me numerous times on this issue, going back to the year 2000 when he wrote me and the Minister of Health at the time, Allan Rock. He said:

Pesticides have been known to be an environmental problem since the publication of *Silent Spring* by Rachel Carson, if not before. Yet we continue to dispense these poisons without full knowledge of which species are affected.

I want to refer to the work of a former member of Parliament for Halifax West, Gordon Earle, who went to great lengths to bring this matter before the House and to table documents and cite studies. I want to refer specifically to documents he circulated from a physician, a Mr. Roy Fox, who documented numerous cases of illness and serious health side effects as a result of exposure to pesticides.

I want to refer specifically to a study by Roy Fox entitled, "The Impact of Chemical Lawn Care on Human Health". The fact is that he has pointed out that such toxins can lead to "disturbed neurological development" and "hormone mimicry", and that we are looking at such things as "life threatening complications such as cardiac arrhythmia and anaphylaxis". He recommends that action be taken because exposure to lawn chemicals can pose serious risks to human health.

I join with everyone who wants to support this motion and make a difference in this Parliament. I thank members for taking the time to discuss such a serious, important issue.

• (1230)

Mr. Ron Cannan (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC): Mr. Speaker, coming from a local government perspective for nine years, working within various components provincially and federally

and having had the discussion numerous times around counsel tables in communities and across the country, I want to remind the member that provinces, municipalities and most communities have the authority to make the decision to further restrict or actually prohibit pesticide use to reflect conditions in their own jurisdiction. If they want to eliminate or ban the cosmetic use of pesticides they have the jurisdiction. They do not have to use the precautionary principle. If it is a community choice they do not need to have a scientific demonstration.

Within my own community of Kelowna—Lake Country, the school district has established a ban on pesticides for cosmetic purposes, which is a choice each school district has. I believe in allowing local government, communities and the provinces to have the decision making ability close to home. In our valley, with the apple and pear orchards, as the member for Kings—Hants mentioned, it is important to use it to create pest management and alternative means of pesticides. We have the sterile insect release program, which has worked very well.

Does the member not feel that the local government and the people closest to the community should have the ability to make that decision and not big brother or the federal government having to impose these regulations?

• (1235)

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis: Mr. Speaker, what we are saying is that the federal government should show some leadership on this issue which has such widespread ramifications for health and well-being. The member on the Conservative benches will know how often in the House we deal with escalating health costs and the drain on the treasury, both federally and provincially, as a result of the use of our health care system, much of which could be preventable.

I would think all of us have an absolute responsibility to ensure that all levels of government deal with this issue. Nothing is wrong with the federal Parliament taking a position on pesticides when it comes to cosmetic use. There is nothing wrong with showing some leadership here that will then help those at provincial and local levels make the decisions they want to make but feel they are up against considerable opposition or obstacles.

We have a great service to provide Canadians. It has nothing to do with being a big brother. It is about not allowing the rules of the jungle to prevail and the survival of the fittest to take precedence over all else.

Mr. Bruce Stanton (Simcoe North, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for her comments and the history lesson we received this afternoon.

However, I would beg the member's indulgence on one item. She mentioned at one point that at the moment she and hon. members in the NDP were not bringing forward any kind of suggestions for bans on herbicides or pesticides for agricultural use. I wonder if she might inform the House as to when we might see a proposed ban of that sort.

Business of Supply

Ms. Judy Wasylcia-Leis: Mr. Speaker, I am glad for the question because, as usual, the Conservative member has chosen to twist my remarks to his convenience. Everyone will know that I did not say that the New Democratic Party was at the moment not considering a ban on other pesticides. If he checks the record he will know I said that there were many things that ought to be looked at in terms of the broad areas of pesticides.

I might refer the member to a few constructive suggestions that were made by myself when Bill C-53 was before the House and, I am sure, by some of his own party members. At the time we had all been fully informed of the health risks of exposure to a considerable number of pesticides. We all believe that it is important for the federal government to uphold the law of the land, which is the precautionary principle, the do no harm principle, and therefore the requirement that every pesticide introduced into the marketplace goes through the test of no danger to the public.

The previous Liberal government refused to do that and we are hoping the Conservatives will apply it because they believe, as we believe, that—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Andrew Scheer): My apologies, but we do have to move on to the next speaker.

The hon. member for Selkirk—Interlake.

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the hon. member for Battlefords—Lloydminster.

I would like to take a few minutes to describe a major development in the regulation of pesticides in Canada. The new Pest Control Products Act was given royal assent on December 12, 2002. It will be brought into force by an order that will be made by the government once key regulations to support the new act are in place. The act will be proclaimed as soon as possible this year, 2006.

Fundamentally, the new act does three things: First, it supports the strong health and environmental protection practices currently employed by Health Canada; second, it makes the pesticide approval or registration system more transparent and accountable; and third, it strengthens the post-registration controls on pesticides.

I will describe each of these areas in more detail. First, the new act strengthens the health and environmental protection provided by the existing act. In order to legally sell or use a pesticide in Canada, the pesticide must first be reviewed and approved or registered by Health Canada.

The new act formalizes important and current risk assessment concepts to protect vulnerable populations. These concepts include the consideration of: different sensitivities of major population groups, including infants and children; exposures from all sources, including food, drinking water and domestic use of pesticides; and finally, cumulative effects of pesticides that act in the same way.

These concepts also apply an additional margin of safety to protect infants and children from risk posed by pesticide residues in food and when pesticides are used in and around homes and schools, and take into account government policies such as the toxic substances management policy.

While new in law, these provisions do not change current practices. They do, however, make visible to the public the fact that these practices are and will continue to be in place and, therefore, will help to enhance public confidence in the regulatory system. This is a clear benefit of having these provisions in the legislation.

The second thing that the new act does, as I mentioned earlier, is to make the registration system more transparent and accountable. This is the area in which there are the most fundamental changes to the existing act. The new act definitively opens up the regulatory system to allow meaningful participation by stakeholders and the public.

The new act does this in the following ways; with access to information. The new act defines two categories of information: confidential test data and confidential business information. All other information is considered non-confidential information under the new Pest Control Products Act and thus will be publicly available. This includes information about the status of all registered pesticides, the applications received by Health Canada and whether the registration was granted or denied, the re-evaluations and special reviews that are underway and, very important, Health Canada's detailed evaluations of the risks and value of registered pesticides. All of this information will be made available through a public registry, electronically whenever possible.

Confidential test data that are generated by companies and provided to the PMRA will be accessible for examination in a reading room.

The only category of information that will not be made available to the public will be confidential business information. Confidential business information is defined very narrowly in the new act. It includes financial information, manufacturing processes and methods for determining a product's composition and formulants that are not of health or environmental concern.

The identity and concentration of formulants that are of health and environmental concern will be made available to the public on labels and material safety data sheets and through the public registry. A list of formulants and contaminants of concern has already been published.

The public will not be the only ones to benefit from this increased transparency. Under the new act, confidential business information and test data can be shared under certain circumstances with federal, provincial and territorial regulators, regulators in other countries and medical professionals, as long as the information is kept confidential.

This is in addition to all the other information that will be available to them through the public registry. This will make it easier for Health Canada to cooperate with other regulators. This is fundamental to smart regulations.

Business of Supply

Under the new Pest Control Products Act, it is mandatory to consult the public before a major registration decision is made final. Major registration decisions include any decision to grant or deny an application for full registration of a new active ingredient or a major new use and any decision to maintain, amend or cancel a registration following a re-evaluation or special review.

● (1240)

The mandatory public consultation process and the public registry will make a great deal of important information available to the public. The public will have access to summaries of the evaluations done by Health Canada scientists which form the basis for proposed regulatory decisions before they are finalized. After a pesticide is registered, the public will have access to the detailed evaluations via the public registry and they will also be able to view the test data on which the evaluations are based. These provisions will support informed citizen participation in the pesticide regulatory system.

The new act also strengthens accountability to Parliament and the Canadian public by requiring that comments received during the mandatory public consultation periods be considered in the final decision to register a pesticide. There is also a requirement for Health Canada to publish its policies, guidelines and codes of practice, among other official documents.

Finally, the act requires that an annual report be tabled in Parliament.

I mentioned at the beginning of my comments that the new act does three main things. The third is to strengthen the post-registration controls on pesticides.

Registration does not confer unrestricted rights respecting the marketing, sale and use of pesticides. On the contrary, the registration includes detailed instructions on how the pesticide must be used in order to comply with the law known as "conditions of registration".

There is also a continuing responsibility to ensure that the risks and value of a registered pesticide are still considered to be acceptable. This is done through a re-evaluation or special review. The new act strengthens the existing provisions for these programs, notably by requiring re-evaluations of pesticides to be done 15 years after they are registered and by providing the minister with the authority to take action if a registrant fails to provide the data needed to conduct re-evaluations.

The new act provides the authority to remove products from the market or modify their conditions of use upon completion of or during a re-evaluation or special review.

The new act specifies that in determining appropriate actions during re-evaluations or special reviews the precautionary principle must be taken into account. In other words, if there is reason to believe that a registered pesticide is posing threats of serious or irreversible damage, lack of full scientific certainty shall not be used as a reason for postponing cost-effective measures to prevent adverse health impact or environmental degradation. This would allow rapid interim action be taken to prevent ongoing exposure to the pesticide while a more detailed scientific review is undertaken. Once the review was completed, that action would be continued, modified or rescinded depending on the results of the review.

Another important feature of the new act is that it includes provisions for mandatory reporting of incidents, that is, new information indicating that the health or environmental risks or the value of a registered pesticide may no longer be acceptable. Regulations will be needed to specify the information that must be reported and the timeframes for reporting.

Information provided through incident reporting could identify the need for a special review. Under the new act, special reviews can also be triggered by information received from other federal or provincial departments, a ban in another member country of the OECD or a request from the public. In the case of a public request, there is discretion as to whether or not to initiate the special review and policies will be developed to guide this decision.

Before closing I would like to reiterate that the new Pest Control Products Act will strengthen Canada's already stringent safeguards against the risks to people and the environment from the use of pesticides. Canadians will have access to more information and new opportunities for input into major pesticide registration decisions. A modernized, strengthened and clarified law on pesticide regulation will create a regulatory system in which all Canadians can have confidence.

● (1245)

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when I look at this motion by the NDP I cannot help but think that if the NDP could they would basically turn back the industrial revolution. We have made great strides with research and science over the decades. This is just the thin tip of the wedge.

I heard some of the speakers from the NDP using the word "cancer". A lot of misinformation is out there about pesticides, herbicides, the kinds of control systems we have in place in this country and the regulatory regime. The member opposite correctly spelled out in detail the Pest Control Products Act.

I would ask the member opposite for his thoughts on the long term impact of the NDP motion. Although those members say that they do not want it to apply to the farm community, I believe it would set the stage for an attack on it. I am from P.E.I. and we have seen it. What is his view? Is there a long term impact here on the ability of the agricultural community to be productive in its efforts and use research and development in terms of their work?

● (1250)

Mr. James Bezan: Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt that within Health Canada the Pest Management Regulatory Agency has the ability to properly screen and oversee the use of pesticides and herbicides in agriculture and for residential use for that matter. There is no doubt that we are protected as citizens. The scientists and specialists are very vigilant in their evaluation of the products that we are using in food production and also in our homes and residential areas.

Business of Supply

I am really concerned about this motion. It is not giving us a chance as the new government to bring in the Pest Control Products Act which passed in 2002 and bring forward those regulations and implement that act in 2006.

The NDP motion also steps on the toes of municipalities and provinces which have the ability to implement their own regulations. This is such a paternal motion that it is going to take away powers from the provinces and municipalities. There is the possibility of future problems down the road for agriculture. I am quite concerned about that.

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis (Winnipeg North, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would love to take on the member for Malpeque and his suggestion that we dare not use the word “cancer” when talking about the toxicity and other problems of pesticides. What are we here for if not to try to make links between cause and effect, to try to deal with people's health problems and try to find the source of the problems? My goodness, I cannot believe that such an irresponsible statement came out of the mouth of the member for Malpeque.

Let me ask a question of the Conservative parliamentary secretary, or at least the member was acting like a parliamentary secretary in that he gave the minister's line to defend the Liberal government's pest control act. We are talking about an act that was passed four years ago by Liberals. It has all kinds of problems and today it is being touted as the answer to this concern about pesticides being used on lawns. The Conservatives look more and more like Liberals every day.

I simply want to ask the member how the government could enact this legislation without considering that the legislation is vague? The precautionary principle is not enshrined in the principles of the act. The act does not ban pesticides for cosmetic purposes. There is a lack of fast track registration processes for lower risk products. There is a failure to require labelling of all toxic formulations. There is a failure to commit money for research into the long term effects of pesticides.

How in the world could the Conservative government simply adopt something that was flawed from the Liberals and not have any second thoughts about it?

Mr. James Bezan: Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member for Winnipeg North knows, we have to have regulations to make an act come into force. The regulations will deal with a lot of the issues that she is talking about. I really believe that once we bring to power the act with the regulations, a lot of the concerns that are being raised by the NDP will be addressed. That, in concert with the efforts being made at the various provincial and municipal levels, will deal with many of the concerns which have been raised in the House today.

Mr. Gerry Ritz (Battlefords—Lloydminster, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to take part in today's debate. It was very interesting to listen to the member for Malpeque talk about his NDP roots. He said that the NDP would turn back the industrial revolution. His party would have taxed it out of existence. Either way it would have been dead under either one of their watches.

It is quite an interesting motion that is before us. The NDP has the right to bring forward any motion it cares to. The NDP always has some arcane thing that will guarantee its members that spot in the corner in perpetuity and never get close to being in government.

The member for Malpeque was making the case that the motion could be extremely intrusive into the way we farm, animal husbandry and a number of other things. The NDP motion states in part that all pesticides which are regulated pursuant to the Pest Control Products Act should be banned within a dwelling house. That is not bad as not too many people keep them in their basement anyway, but the second paragraph states “on any parcel of land on which a dwelling house is situated” and then the next one states “on any place that is within one hundred metres of a parcel of land described in paragraph (ii)”. That is a dwelling house on a parcel of land.

When we travel through the rural countryside there is a lot of crop land and pasture land that comes up to within 100 metres of the house of the farmer or rancher. The NDP is putting restrictions on that farm yard already. In my case, I have a pasture and hay land connected to my house acreage. It would be criminal intent. God forbid, I have my registered gun in the closet and now I have to hide my 2,4-D.

It just escapes me how the NDP could come up with this type of legislation. I know that the leader of the NDP, who is the past president of the FCM, wants to get back in there and make rules and regulations. He wants to be a big fish in a little pond, where here he is a little fish in a big pond and does not get the recognition, so he has to go back and fight some of these fights.

The provinces and municipalities already have the authority to put bans in place so that dangerous products are not used for cosmetic purposes on lawns and so forth and it is not cosmetic use of dangerous stuff. Certainly the labelling has changed on many of the cans of 2,4-D over the years. There is a lot more transparency and accountability in how products are used. Premixed versions can be bought if people are afraid of the real thing. We have used them on the farm for years and we are quite comfortable with them.

I heard a member from one of the ridings in Winnipeg talk about how 50% of our children in Canada are going to get cancer. Scare tactics go a long way with this type of legislation. Certainly the incidence of cancer may be higher for a couple of reasons. We are keeping track and have better records than we used to and people are living longer. At 90 or 95 people are bound to die of something other than old age. It just happens.

I look at this type of motion that the NDP has brought forward. Anyone who does landscaping and has an office on the premises, anyone who has a turf farm and an office, golf courses with rental shacks could not use any type of chemical or pesticide at all. Some of them have gone the biological route and are doing different things. They are using Javex bleach and other things as well, but they have other consequences.

We are tying the hands of many folks who rely on trade and coming up with a product that they can export to the standards that we have with our trading partners, the United States, Japan and others who have much stronger regulatory regimes than we do. We are already going beyond where we need to with regulations.

Business of Supply

I will talk about one particular product, 2,4-D. It is one of the oldest chemicals around. It has been registered since 1946. It has been around for 60 plus years. There has not really been any major problem. People should not mix it with Coke; it is not good for them. Most people are smart enough to realize that they should not gargle with the stuff. They should wear gloves and long sleeve shirts. It is called common sense. Those labels are actually on the can or jug. We read that first. Of course, like all men, we like to read maps to get directions so we always read those instructions first. We know enough to be careful with this stuff. There are a lot more noxious problems out there as well.

I drove in this morning and it is the Canadian Tulip Festival in Ottawa. There are beautiful gardens of tulips, yet right across the road the city's lawn is polluted with dandelions because the city no longer sprays anything. It has fallen under this regime. It is the city's choice. It is the city's decision and the citizens of Ottawa will sink or swim with that, but it is the city's decision to make.

● (1255)

The NDP, in presenting this motion, wants the criminal law powers of the federal government to trample over everybody's rights and enforce its twisted logic and that somehow if we do all of this, everybody will be better off.

That is okay, but all of this has to be based on some sort of sound scientific process. We have that through the Canadian government in the Pest Management Regulatory Agency. While we may have month by month and case by case battles with that particular agency, it has done a decent job in staying up to speed and getting on top of things. There are a lot of new products out there that the PMRA is very lax on. It is always somewhere between 200 and 400 applications behind. There are brand new, less toxic materials out there that need to get in play in Canada. It is up to the PMRA to move ahead with that, but to totally ban or be able to add to or subtract from this list at the whim of the NDP, or whatever government decides it wants to go there, does not make sound policy.

I know the NDP has a problem with the act that came in four years ago. That act is constantly under review. 2,4-D itself has been reviewed a number of times and always to the betterment of the people using it. The labelling changes, as I mentioned before. There are significant changes in the way we handle and use 2,4-D.

There is a tremendous process that is put in play to register and re-register any of these products on an ongoing basis. The NDP needs to get caught up with that a little. They are always at the forefront, the vanguard of leading the charge on something out there that is going to get us if we do not regulate it out of existence.

Another case in point is the Cartagena protocol. The NDP was really supportive of that and wanted to implement it. That is a global definition of the use and non-use of genetically modified organisms. The problem is we have been doing that for 12 years and still a basic definition has not been agreed to globally as to what a modified organism is. Until we get the framework right, we cannot start hanging the drapes and putting the window dressing in place.

That is what the New Democrats tend to do with these types of motions that come forward. They are well intentioned but miss the

mark by 100 miles because they tend to trample on everybody else's jurisdictional rights: the provinces, the municipalities, the RMs in the rural areas and those types of things.

What the New Democrats are looking for is that criminal law power. The thing they are missing is the scientific process that leads to the use or non-use of any of these pesticides and chemicals, whether it is for cosmetic use or use down home on the farm.

Certainly we have to be cognizant of the fact that there can be problems. We need to make sure that they are not tank mixed with certain other products that will incite some reactions. There are a tremendous number of problems out there that people can get into. However, common sense should prevail and science should prevail to make sure that we are doing the right things at the right time.

● (1300)

Mr. Brian Murphy (Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we learned a lot in that discourse. There were jokes about cancer. There were jokes that not all the hon. member's guns are registered. Cancer as an epidemic or pandemic is explained away as people living longer and there being better records. And he talked about having the science on pesticides. The hon. member also said not to mix some of those pesticides with Coke or to gargle with it. I thank the hon. member for those insightful, instructive comments.

The Pest Control Products Act has to do with the chemical composition of a given pesticide. It has very little to do with the safety of its use. While I do not go all the way in joining with my NDP colleagues with respect to the motion, I want to ask the hon. member why the government, when it finds time to meet with all of the premiers, would not suggest that amendments to the municipalities acts in the various provinces would give them the power to use, or not, pesticides within their municipalities. Why does the government not encourage that? This was recently done in New Brunswick by Bill 62, an act to amend the municipalities act, which speaks very much to and is very similar to the NDP motion.

Instead of telling us not to gargle with pesticides, why does the member not encourage his government to meet with the provinces to amend the municipalities acts where they need to be amended, so that this scourge of factual cancer happening due to pesticide misapplication, not on farms, be attacked? Why was he not more serious about a very serious topic?

Mr. Gerry Ritz: Mr. Speaker, no one ever takes cancer lightly. That is just not done and I did not do that in my speech. I spoke about the misdirection of this particular motion in somehow addressing that fact.

The member speaks about why we do not get out there, lead the charge, and beat the municipalities into submission and force them to make these changes. That is not how it is done. He might be a rookie in this place, but he is old enough to know better than that.

Business of Supply

The municipalities are a creature of the provincial governments. There are provincial governments that have made these changes. I happen to have a copy of the program that Ontario has taken a look at. Good for it. It will make the changes that are needed for its people. I am not going to dictate from on high what changes it should make. It knows the instances that are required in its own jurisdictions, and the member should know that. If New Brunswick has a good proposal, it will talk about it at the interprovincial meetings.

The Prime Minister has met with every premier across this country, some on more than one occasion. Those members stand in this place and pontificate about how we are snubbing this one or that one. The premiers themselves say the next day in a press release that they had a great meeting with the Prime Minister. Just because those members were not invited does not mean that the meetings did not happen.

We all know what is going on here. The Liberals are trying to claw their way back to some semblance of authority in this country. They have about 10 years in the penalty box coming up for them and they will not be getting that authority back.

• (1305)

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, more to the technical side of this particular motion and its impact on the farm community. I will turn to the Peace River region as an example. It is seed country, fescue seed, and one of the laws that is in place in that region is that vacant lots, even house lots, have to ensure that there are no thistles. Pretty well the only way to control thistles in an area that big is through the use of pesticides or herbicides.

If this motion were to pass, then we would have, first, a dispute over whose law prevails. However, would there not be a tremendous impact on the ability of seed producers, fescue, alfalfa, et cetera, in that region to meet the standards of weed control in order to market internationally? Because if we cannot spray and ensure that there are no thistles, then there would be a problem, in terms of marketing. I wonder if the member has any thoughts.

Mr. Gerry Ritz: Mr. Speaker, the member is absolutely right. It certainly would interfere with what we do on a global scale. However, having said that, there are farmers out there who do not use any pesticides and herbicides and they would be the first ones to say we can control it without the use of pesticides, but not on the commercial scale that we are seeing.

Generally, organic farms, and I am generalizing here and I am sure someone will take me down a peg or two, are smaller because they are much more labour intensive in that they cannot go out there with a 100-foot-wide sprayer boom and make a swathe and say the job is done. However, we have certainly developed a lot of new products that are much more resistant to takeover from weed situations, for example, one-pass spraying.

Certainly, what created a lot of the hurt during the dirty thirties out there in western Canada was not necessarily just the drought. We actually had higher levels of moisture per year than normal but the problem was the weed infestation.

The member talked about the thistle. The Russian thistle used to go across and we would have fences 20 feet high and 40 feet wide

because it piled up there and created such a problem that any little bit of moisture the crops were trying to get access to the thistle sucked it up. If it had not been for the advent of products like 2,4-D at that time, we would not have had any kind of farming left in western Canada at all.

There is good and there is bad, and there is right and there is wrong, but this type of motion is certainly wrong-headed in its application.

Mrs. Irene Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with my colleague from Parkdale—High Park.

There seems to be some confusion among members in the House today. We are talking about the non-essential cosmetic use of pesticides. The use of cosmetic pesticides is an issue that is of great importance to me and to people in the city of London where this issue is currently being debated.

I strongly believe that cosmetic use of pesticides should be banned unless it is proven that pesticides do not pose risks to the health of humans.

I find it most troubling that the pesticide industry keeps on insisting that there is no conclusive evidence that these chemicals are dangerous to humans and animals. It reminds me of the argument used by the tobacco industry when fears about the effects of tobacco surfaced many years ago.

It is an argument that lacks logic. Why on earth would we take a chance? We need to know unequivocally that the products that we use do not pose a threat. There is significant evidence that it is prudent to support a ban.

A study done by the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario outlined the major effects of exposure to pesticides on human health and the list is frightening. Some of the possible effects include: solid tumours, including brain cancer, prostate cancer, kidney cancer and pancreatic cancer; leukemia; non-Hodgkin's lymphoma; genotoxic effects; skin diseases; neurological diseases; and an impact on reproduction.

Those most likely to be affected by pesticide use are vulnerable patients, including children, seniors and pregnant women. I would like to make a special note of the impact of pesticides on pregnant women. I know the health of pregnant women is of particular concern to some members of the House.

The College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario stated that "Pregnant women are a special risk group, given the findings showing increased risk of childhood and acute lymphocytic leukemia when women use pesticides in the home and garden during pregnancy". The health of unborn children should not be traded for a weed free lawn.

Pesticides are used on lawns, gardens, school yards and parks, all places where children play. It should not be surprising then that children are one of the higher risk groups. Exposure to pesticides increases the child's risk of cancer, something no child should ever have to experience.

Business of Supply

The Canadian Cancer Society also calls for a ban on cosmetic pesticides and has stated that “appropriate action should be taken to limit the risk to human health. This is especially true when the reason for using pesticides on lawns is to prevent weeds and plants that can be removed in other, potentially less damaging ways”.

Even the federal government has called for a ban on the cosmetic use of pesticides. In a federal report issued by the Standing Committee on the Environment and Sustainable Development, it states:

The Committee firmly believes that a moratorium on pesticide use for aesthetic purposes is necessary until science has proven that the pesticides involved do not constitute a health threat and some light has been shed on the consequences of their use in urban areas. Pesticide use should only be permitted in an emergency, such as a serious pest infestation which threatens the health of people and the environment.

There have been over 100 municipalities in Canada that have adopted pesticide bylaws and many more which are considering a change. One of those municipalities is London, Ontario. The people of London have been demanding a pesticide ban for four years now and still have no ban.

Federal legislation would benefit my riding and the people of London. A poll done in London this past January found that only 23% of London homeowners currently use cosmetic or non-essential pesticides at home. The poll also found that 60% of homeowners who currently use those pesticides would likely or very likely stop using them if they were provided with information on alternative methods to have a weed free garden and lawn. Furthermore, a total of 61% of London residents surveyed agreed that the city of London should pass a bylaw phasing out the use of lawn pesticides.

Ironically, the city of London, by refusing to move forward on cosmetic use of pesticides, has actually stopped using pesticides in parks. The lawns of Victoria Park remain beautiful and green, drawing thousands of visitors downtown every summer for community festivals, and pesticides are not used.

● (1310)

For those who feel a green, weed free lawn is a priority, there are alternatives that are both safe and healthy. London businesses, such as My Green Garden, provide safe organic alternatives that will not harm our children.

This issue is so important to me and the people in the riding of London—Fanshawe that on Friday, May 5, I launched a petition along with London City Councillor Bill Armstrong calling on the Government of Canada to recognize that human and environmental health should take precedence in legislative decision making, as well as in the product approval processes in every jurisdiction in Canada. The petition also calls on the government to enact legislation banning the use of chemical pesticides for cosmetic purposes until rigorous independent scientific and medical testing of chemical pesticides and parliamentary review of results are conducted for both existing and new products, and to enact legislation applying the precautionary principle in regard to restricting future allowable usage in order to minimize risk to human and environmental health. The petition already has well over 400 signatures from residents of London who want a safe and healthy city.

I think it is important to hear the words of some of the people who have signed on to this petition, people who will be directly affected if this motion passes today. One London resident stated:

I fully support a ban on pesticides in the City of London, and have personally practised non-chemical gardening for over 20 years, with no increase in weeds or other pests.

Another resident said:

I strongly support the bill. My neighbour sprays and each time he does my property is saturated with chemicals too.

Another said:

We cannot afford to subject our children and grandchildren to the continued barrage of toxins! Given the rising cancer rate, it is best to err on the side of caution, especially for those toxins that serve purely aesthetic purposes!

Yet another resident said:

We need to stop all this contamination before it is too late. Our health, our children and our pets are much more important than having the greenest lawn on the block.

Pesticides cause cancer. Those who do not believe this have their heads in the sand. It is time we came into the modern world, ban pesticides, and start thinking about the health of our citizens. Another resident stated:

Healthy humans are more important than lovely lawns. Very few weeds are truly “noxious”; in fact, if many of them were difficult to cultivate, we might actually plant them in our gardens. To a child, who is too young to differentiate between weeds and flowers, a sea of dandelions is a treasure trove of flowers to present to mother...It's all really a matter of what one values most: the health of our family, friends and pets or the appearance of our lawns.

Finally, one London resident it best, “For the health of our country, please enact this ban”.

The College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario stated, “Pesticides are designed to kill something”. That is the problem. They do kill. Why would we want to expose ourselves to something like that, something designed to specifically kill?

● (1315)

Ms. Peggy Nash (Parkdale—High Park, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased and proud to stand today and support the motion brought forward by the NDP. I want to congratulate my party for proposing a ban on the cosmetic use of pesticides. This is a very important proposal. I am very pleased to be here in support of this on behalf of my constituents in the riding of Parkdale—High Park.

There is a huge concern about the environment. I have had many people call me specifically with concerns about the environment. I am very proud to be part of a party that would bring forward a measure such as this to deal with pesticides.

Rachel Carson, the author who wrote the book *Silent Spring* back in 1962, first documented a terrifying record of environmental harm caused by pesticides. This was a groundbreaking work and it led to the modern environmental movement.

We are talking today about pesticides. As others have said, pesticides are not produced naturally. They are synthetic toxic chemicals that are deliberately spread over large areas. They are poisonous to people because they are designed to kill living things.

What are the health impacts of pesticides? Pesticides have been linked to cancer. The incidence of childhood cancer, neuroblastoma, doubles when landscaping pesticides are used around the home.

The Canadian Cancer Society says:

Since the ornamental use of pesticides has no countervailing health benefit and has the potential to cause harm, we call for a ban on the use of pesticides on lawns and gardens.

Pesticides have also been linked to skeletal abnormalities and to immune system damage. The pesticide chemical malathion has been shown to weaken white blood cells that attack cancer cells and viral infections.

Pesticides have been linked to neurological damage. Pesticides are often neuro-toxins, adversely impacting brain development. There are reproductive effects. Pesticides can be found in semen and linked to sperm abnormalities. They can be linked to increased miscarriage rates and birth defects. They are linked to difficulty in conceiving and bearing children. Chronic exposure to pesticides can cause infertility.

With the growing evidence that many chemical pesticides are linked to cancer, birth defects and other devastating illnesses, it is time the federal government acted to protect all Canadians and the environment from these poisons.

While these chemicals may keep our backyards and public spaces looking green, the problem is they are seeping into our soil, leaching into our water and being absorbed by our homes, our bodies and our children. That is simply unacceptable. We owe it to our children to ensure they are growing up and playing in the safest possible environment.

The science is in. I just described how pesticides have been linked to cancer, skeletal abnormalities, neurological damage and reproductive effects. Pesticide manufacturers need to prove their products are safe before they can be marketed to the Canadian public.

The time for debate has passed. It is time for concrete action by the federal government to ban the unnecessary use of these chemicals now. Currently, only Australia, Italy, France, Belgium and the U.S. use more pesticides per capita than Canada. Again, remember the Canadian Cancer Society has called for a ban of pesticides.

We are not dealing with agricultural pesticides. We are not dealing with all kinds of pesticide use. We are dealing with pesticides for cosmetic use. Over a hundred municipalities and other jurisdictions have already made the decision to ban cosmetic pesticides. Not one of those jurisdictions has decided to reverse that decision once it has been made.

I am here on behalf of the citizens I represent in Parkdale—High Park to say, as strongly as I can, that we banned the use of cosmetic pesticides in the city of Toronto. I urge the House to ban cosmetic pesticides across Canada.

• (1320)

Mr. Bruce Stanton (Simcoe North, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have listened to a number of speakers this afternoon and earlier in this morning and I get an overwhelming sense that attention is not necessarily being paid to the science.

Business of Supply

The member mentioned that the science has proclaimed these conclusions. Let us look at the re-evaluations and the reports of the re-evaluations. For example, 2,4-D has just gone through a re-evaluation and has been re-registered. An overwhelming body of evidence, an extensive body of information, comprehensive and robust details suggest this product is not a danger to human health or the environment.

When I hear reports such as that and contrast them with the kind of comments we have heard today, many of which are prefaced with “could cause” and “may cause”, would the member would care to comment on this rather contradiction we see in today's debate?

Ms. Peggy Nash: Mr. Speaker, it may be that not all of the scientific data is 100% complete, but I would remind the hon. member that bodies like the Canadian Cancer Society, acting in the best interests of all Canadians, are urging that we ban pesticides. There is very strong indication that pesticides are linked to ill health. Surely the obligation is to prove that chemicals are completely safe as opposed to waiting until all the epidemiological evidence is complete, at the cost of lives and health of our citizens, before making the kind of ironclad decision as the hon. member is suggesting.

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is no question that we must have the proper regulations in place and that the use of these products must be based on sound research. As well, the use of the products must be in accordance with the recommendations on how they be used. I think that is one of the difficulties with the use of herbicides and pesticides on lawns for cosmetic purposes. The training is not there as it is in the agricultural sector. We know we have to absolutely meet the exact requirements and not apply an overdose.

Prince Edward Island has had this fight for a long time. We have seen the misconceptions about the potato industry and its use of products, the necessary to use these products.

I am worried about the word “cosmetic” and what the motion would mean over the long haul. I see this as the tip of the iceberg, which will leave the impression that there is not sound science around these products. Could the member explain to us exactly what they mean? Where is the limit of cosmetic use of a product? What is the limit and where do we draw the line?

• (1325)

Ms. Peggy Nash: Mr. Speaker, it is clear that what is being proposed is not to affect agricultural use of pesticides.

Let us do a cost benefit analysis. Let us put on one side the ability of someone to have unfettered right to use pesticides and to have an unnaturally pristine lawn. On the other side is the cost to human health. Some children will have neurological damage and some families will be unable to conceive as a result of pesticide exposure.

We must err on the side of safety, especially when we are dealing with cosmetic use of pesticides. With this intention, we are not dealing with agricultural use.

Business of Supply

Hon. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to the debate. It is one that has gone on in the House in the past and it is one that has gripped the public many times. On the surface it sounds very attractive. Pesticides cause cancer is a very scary title. Do the facts bear out that kind of a title? Do the comments coming from the NDP, which are the roots of this motion, rooted in good science and experience? I would submit they are not.

When we go through some of the studies, they show that a lot of the anti-pesticide comments are rooted in fear and fly in the face of common science.

Let us take a look at some of the premises. The first one is cancer rates. Have cancer rates gone up or have they gone down? We all know people who have had cancer and we know many more people have it. The reality is we are living longer. Males living in my province of British Columbia have the greatest longevity of any place in the entire world. Canadians ought to be proud of that. Indeed, Canadian women and men are some of the longest living people.

Cancer, perhaps above all others factors, is a function of age. As we get older, the incidence of cancer rises. Our ability to contract cancer increases with age. It is a function of our genetics, what we have done to our bodies such inaction, poor dietary habits and smoking.

Has the incidence of cancer increased? No. The number of people, per population, who get cancer has remained relatively static over the last 10 years. In some areas it has gone up. For example, the incidence of lung cancer in women has gone up because more and more women are smoking. The incidence of lung cancer in men has gone down. The incidence of cervical cancer has gone down because women have been more adept in having pap smears to monitor cervical cancer. This has saved thousands and thousands of women's lives. Thankfully we have those tools.

Do pesticides cause cancer? The anti-pesticide groups will not tell us this, but 99% of the pesticides we consume are natural.

I will be splitting my time, Mr. Speaker, with the member for Malpeque.

Over the decades ample studies have been done on pesticides. They have shown no increase in the incidence of cancer in populations that have been subjected to pesticides. Most of the pesticides we spray are natural. If we compare synthetic pesticides to natural pesticides, there will be no difference in the statistics of the mortality and morbidity. These chemicals, natural and synthetic, have been exhaustively studied for decades. Large populations have been looked at.

If we were to remove or ban pesticides, which some would like to do, a number of things would happen.

First, the amount of land needed to cultivate the foods we consume would increase. This would result in a diminishment of biodiversity and would affect our environment in a negative way.

Second, the cost of food would go up an estimated 27% if we were to ban pesticides. I know the member is talking about cosmetic

pesticides, but it is worth pointing out that many people may be confused by cosmetic pesticides and the desire to ban pesticides in food productivity.

• (1330)

What are the four or five things that have proven to have a profound impact on reducing cancer rates in our country? Working with its provincial counterparts, the provincial ministers of health and ministers of education, the government should be doing the following things.

First, the government should be investing in a smoking reduction strategy. Smoking kills and we need to continue to reduce smoking, especially among young women where smoking has increased.

Second, the government needs to encourage physical activity. We are finding that younger people now are less physically active than ever before. The incidence of childhood obesity has risen to epidemic proportions. Children must get out and play and become physically active.

Working with the provinces, we could perhaps institute an awareness campaign to get adults to play with their children for 30 minutes a day. That would not only benefit the children but it also would benefit the adults. Physical activity is central, not only to physical well-being but to mental health. We just had Mental Health Week. If we were to compare a group of physically active people on anti-depressants to an inactive group of people on anti-depressants, we would find that the first group is the healthiest group.

What also works very well is the Headstart program. For those who are not aware of this program, it is probably the government's best bang for its buck in reducing an array of socio-economic problems. The Headstart program is simple and inexpensive. It is rooted in ensuring that parents have the proper parenting skills and it works on the first eight years of life.

There is a program in Ypsilanti, Michigan, which has been going on for 30 years. If we were to compare the Moncton Headstart program that Claudette Bradshaw started to the healthystart program in Hawaii, we would find that the Headstart program produces enormous bang for a buck, \$7 to \$8 for every \$1 invested. It keeps kids healthier and more active. It reduces the incidents of unemployment later on by keeping kids in school longer. It decreases teen pregnancy rates and it decreases incidents of youth crime. This is a win-win situation for all concerned. The Headstart program is a healthy start program where children can be inculcated into proper dietary habits which in turn has a positive impact on their lives.

Business of Supply

The longevity of Japanese children is quite extraordinary and the incidence of various cancers is quite low. One of the reasons for this is their lifestyle. The dietary habits of Japanese children are quite different from children in North America. Their consumption of sweets is quite low while their consumption of healthy foods, such as fish and vegetables, is quite high. These children know the types of foods they are eating and why they are eating them. This works well. Studies have shown that these children grow up to become healthy adults. If we look at these kinds of initiatives and behaviours, we will be able to address people's health.

I would submit to the NDP members that their initiative, while well-meaning, is actually misguided and not rooted in fact and science. I would encourage members to look at some of the work that was done by the co-founder and former chief scientist of Greenpeace, Dr. Patrick Moore, who was part of an international panel of cancer experts and wrote some very good articles. Along with Professor Bruce Ames of the University of California, Berkeley, Dr. Moore has been trying to tell the world for years that "pesticides in food are not a significant health issue".

● (1335)

As a member of the National Academy of Sciences and a National Medal of Science recipient for his research in cancer, especially in the area of chemical toxicity, Dr. Ames has found that natural pesticides that plants produce to protect themselves from insects and fungi are just as toxic as the synthetic pesticides in agricultural production.

In short, if we were to affect the health of Canadians, the solutions I have given would be an effective plan of action to reduce cancer rates. Banning pesticides in the manner that the NDP is suggesting will not.

Ms. Denise Savoie (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we all know the hon. member, who is also a doctor, has spent the last many years among politicians rather than specifically with patients and children.

I have a list of names of medical doctors, who see children and other patients on a regular basis, who have spoken out about their concern with the use of pesticides.

Dr. Joe Reisman, chief of pediatrics says:

It is not a case of innocent until proven guilty. We have ample reason to be concerned. It is a case of acting on what we know now, because health risks are cumulative and can last for years.

We have Dr. Alex MacKenzie, a pediatrician at the CHEO Research Institute, and hematologist, Dr. Richard van der Jagt from the Canadian Leukemia Studies Group. I have a full list of doctors. I wonder if the hon. member believes these doctors are mistaken in their concerns from their observations.

Hon. Keith Martin: Mr. Speaker, I respect the individuals the member mentioned. One can always use anecdotal experiences to arrive at conclusions but to do an adequate scientific assessment on a particular issue, one has to look at a statistically significant population of individuals and do a rigorous scientific assessment of those individuals to determine whether the hypothesis is correct. That is the scientific method and that is the way in which rigorous science is done.

Let me quote an international panel of cancer experts who looked at a large population of people. They examined over 70 published studies on this particular question: Do pesticides cause cancer, yes or no? The National Cancer Institute of Canada organized this group of experts and they reached the following conclusion:

Evaluating over 70 published studies, it concluded that contrary to allegations by some activists, it was "not aware of any definitive evidence to suggest that synthetic pesticides contribute significantly to overall cancer mortality".

Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I wish I had time to go through the bibliography that I have and some of the medical research that we have been studying but I wonder if my colleague is aware of the study that shows that the rate of childhood neuroblastoma doubles when exposed to landscaping pesticides. I would be happy to cite the article or I will send it over to him.

When we argue that reproductive effects are tied to 2,4-D, there is research that links 2,4-D to sperm abnormalities, miscarriage rates, difficulty conceiving and bearing children and birth defects. Individual studies have been done for each of those and I would be happy to forward them to him.

Regarding our argument about neurological disorders being linked to exposure to pesticides, Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, ALS, autism and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, each are associated with an individual study done by American, Canadian and European universities and hospitals.

I would be happy to get this scientific backing to him so he is aware that our complaints are based on science.

● (1340)

Hon. Keith Martin: Mr. Speaker, I would be happy to look at those studies and I welcome the hon. member's willingness to produce them. I will look at them with the same unjaudiced, objective eye as we would look at any studies in this House that come to us.

At the root of this is the notion that all of us would like to ensure that whatever legislative initiatives we are pursuing are pursued on the basis of good facts and good science. Sometimes it is difficult to parse out what is good science and what is not because some individuals will throw out things under the guise of so-called science when, if we look at the methodology of what they have done, it is deeply flawed.

It is a difficult thing to parse out because very few of us are experts in the scientific method and to analyze these studies is sometimes difficult, which is why we hope that all of these studies will be peer reviewed studies that are well-established and well-documented in respected journals.

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am extremely concerned about this motion and its implications. The motion is applying a blanket treatment across the country and making a policy decision that is not based on sound scientific reasoning. In fact, it flies in the face of sound scientific reasoning and uses some studies and facts of some people with certain axes to grind.

Business of Supply

Yes, there is a legitimate concern out there, but this motion would apply a blanket approach to the whole country on an issue that is extremely complicated and perhaps better applied at the municipal and/or provincial levels because some jurisdictions are different in terms of the use of pesticides and herbicides as they relate to the agricultural community.

While the intent of the motion may be sound, as we are all concerned about health, the decisions we make on this matter need to be based on the best science available. I do not believe an overall ban is the right approach to take if we ban for cosmetic use based on emotion and not on fact, or if there is a misrepresentation of the facts, or if somebody is blaming pesticides for genetic defects in people or health concerns when in fact they may be caused by something else. If we can ban for cosmetic use on those bases, then we basically throw away the ability to make decisions on absolute facts or on the least risk based on sound scientific principles.

If we were to ban the use of pesticides, herbicides, et cetera, for cosmetic use not based on sound science, we would justify the misconceptions of facts related to their use in the country. That would be the slim edge of the wedge moving toward to the agricultural sector and its ability to be productive and produce crops with the advantage of many of the products we gained through the industrial revolution.

As well, if we were to go with this motion, the House of Commons would be justifying the exaggerations about the use of pesticides and chemicals that are in the general community. The right approach is one that is based on good regulation and sound science. I believe the previous government was, as I believe the present government is, moving in the direction of ensuring that the sound science related to the use of these chemicals exists.

As a government, we proposed several amendments to Canada's pesticide regime in 2002. Bill C-8 received royal assent on December 12, 2002. It was scheduled to come into force in 2005 but, as I understand it, has not yet come into force. We should ensure that it moves forward with some haste.

Currently, the Pest Control Products Act states that any pesticide product manufactured or distributed in Canada must be registered with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. These regulations set out what kinds of products can be sold or used in Canada, including what kinds of substances can be used in pesticides. They set out the requirements for the packaging and labelling of products and any safety requirements of pesticides.

● (1345)

The entire focus of the Pest Control Products Act is on things such as the chemical composition of the pesticide, its registration, and determining whether or not it is safe to use. I might underline the fact that it is illegal to use a pesticide in any manner other than that which is stated on the label. We went through some considerable turmoil in the agricultural community over that matter. The fact is that everyone is now required to take training. There are much safer standards around the use of pesticides in the agricultural community than there used to be, for everything from clothing to breathing apparatus and its use and to not spraying pesticides when winds are at certain levels or prior to a heavy rainstorm and so on.

There actually has been a tremendous cultural change in the agricultural community as that community has tried to meet the standards to ensure that when its members are using products it does not jeopardize their health, the community's health or in fact the environmental health of the country.

I might point out as well that the changes that the Pest Control Products Act sought to accomplish were the following: clear requirements for the minister to give special consideration to children and to assess aggregate exposure and cumulative effects; clearer authority for the minister to refuse to consider an application or to maintain a registration if the applicant or registrant does not provide the information necessary to substantiate claims that the risks and value of the product are acceptable; mandatory reporting of adverse effects of registered pesticides; new opportunities for informed public participation in the pest management regulations; and strengthened measures to encourage compliance. Overall, we have the Pest Management Regulatory Agency, which is there to ensure the approval of and compliance with the regulatory regime surrounding the products we use in the agriculture sector.

As for the motion, the NDP certainly has absolutely lost touch with its rural roots, which is where the NDP got its start. It goes to some length to say that the motion will not impact on the agriculture sector. If this motion sets up a system whereby we bring in bans based on emotion rather than basing things on sound science and scientific principles, it will in fact have an impact in fact on everything we do. I have seen that happen in the agriculture sector in Prince Edward Island as we tried to bring in new products.

It will in fact have an impact. Yes, there are fears out there, no question about it, but this motion is put forward on the basis of using the health scare, and to a certain extent that is legitimate, but whatever we do in the final analysis should be based on sound science.

The way the motion is worded, it in fact will, as I read it, affect "any parcel of land on which a dwelling-house is situated". That would be dwelling-houses in rural areas as well. What about not controlling the weed population for those dwelling-houses in rural areas? Earlier I used the example of up in Peace River country where they are into the worldwide production of seeds, alfalfa seeds and fescue seeds, and if we cannot control those weeds around the dwelling-houses or on vacant property, then we do lose our opportunity to market those seeds elsewhere around the world.

The bottom line is that I strongly oppose this motion because it is not based on sound facts, it is not based on scientific principles and it will be the thin edge of the wedge in the House of Commons in terms of making policy based on strict emotion on matters that really require the judgment of sound science.

● (1350)

Ms. Peggy Nash (Parkdale—High Park, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to draw to the hon. member's attention the statement by the Ontario College of Family Physicians, which conducted a comprehensive review of the effects of pesticides on human health. Following this review, the College of Family Physicians said:

—the review shows consistent links to serious illnesses such as cancer, reproductive problems and neurological diseases, among others. The study also shows that children are particularly vulnerable to pesticides.

Business of Supply

I know the hon. member's colleague likes to blame the victim, that it is all about diet and anti-depressants and weight, and he says that over the last 10 years there is not a large increase in cancer, but I suggest that we go back to before the beginning of the use of pesticides, that is, well prior to Rachel Carson's book, *Silent Spring*. We would have to go back to a pre-pesticide era to really measure the extent of the effects of these carcinogens.

Why does the member advocate rights for pesticides, that is, that they are innocent until proven guilty, rather than agreeing with the Canadian Cancer Society, the Ontario College of Family Physicians and many other reputable scientists in saying that we will weigh in on the side of health and on the side of our children?

Hon. Wayne Easter: Mr. Speaker, I have to raise the concern about whether the comments made by the group she quoted are in fact made on sound scientific analysis. There is no question that in this debate there are facts on both sides. That is why, at the end of the day, on a complicated issue like this one, a decision needs to be based on sound scientific principles.

The last thing I would advocate for is the pesticide companies; I would not advocate for them at all. In fact, that is why we have put in tougher regulations and stronger scientific requirements that they have to meet. For the farm community, and even for the urban community for the use of cosmetic pesticides, we put in place tougher regulations in terms of how they apply the product. We have tightened up massively in the last 10 years in terms of the use of these products and how they are applied so that we do in fact protect the environment and people's health.

• (1355)

Ms. Catherine Bell (Vancouver Island North, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Windsor West.

First I would like to thank the hon. member for Toronto—Danforth for bringing this important motion before the House. As he said in his remarks earlier today, this is one concrete step “the federal government can take to protect all Canadians from chemicals linked to cancer, birth defects” and other devastating illnesses.

This is a serious issue that affects our environment, and a serious issue that affects our health, and it must be dealt with on a national level. Citizens across this country have been speaking out about the cosmetic use of pesticides in their communities. Now it is time for the federal government not only to listen but to act.

The cosmetic use of pesticides is something whose time is over. We should not be pouring harsh chemicals on our lawns and gardens to kill a weed or a bug. These chemicals were designed to kill and that is just what they do. They do not stop at only weeds and bugs. Medical studies have shown that exposure to all commonly used pesticides adversely affects health. In fact, there is no class of pesticide free of cancer-causing potential. That alone should warn us away from using them, but it does not. We are given the illusion that some chemicals are safer than others, but again, let us consider this: these chemicals were designed to kill something.

There are much better ways of making our lawns and gardens greener and healthier at the same time. We should be encouraging composting and natural native plantings in public spaces and in our

yards across this country. This is something that is already happening in many communities that have realized the negative environmental and health implications of pesticide use.

Citizens across this country from coast to coast to coast have been pushing for bans on pesticides. In the southern part of my riding, there is a small rail corridor known as the Esquimalt and Nanaimo Railway. It runs along the east side of Vancouver Island from Victoria to Courtenay. Along the way it passes many small and large communities, numerous rivers and streams, small vegetable and dairy farms, forests, several schools, and countless rural backyards.

As everyone knows, the west coast of B.C. is somewhat of a rainforest and vegetation grows quite quickly there, but last year a decision was made to control the vegetation along the rail line with a chemical known as 2,4-D. Many of us in the communities along the tracks were shocked. This was something that was done back in the 1950s, we thought, and surely this could not be happening in 2005, when we know the dangers of such chemicals.

How could this even be considered in such an environmentally sensitive area? Salmon-bearing streams along the route are already in jeopardy due to a host of things such as lack of enhancement, bad logging practices and fast-paced development. What about the wildlife, the deer and bear and elk that live in the forest, and the hundreds of species of birds and small mammals whose lives would be at risk?

Then there is the issue of runoff, another phenomenon of the west coast, where we get a lot of rain. Anything we put on the ground is bound to find its way into a stream, a river, our drinking water and, eventually, the ocean that surrounds us.

One of the small vegetable farms along the rail line is Ironwood Farm, a small organic farm that sells local produce to a local market in the spring and summer. These farmers were particularly concerned about runoff and over-spraying, which would contaminate their wonderful produce and render it unsellable. This would not only damage their reputation as organic farmers but would have a devastating financial impact on the family run business. But—

The Speaker: I am reluctant to interrupt the hon. member in the midst of her speech, but the time has reached two o'clock, when it is time to move on. I can assure the hon. member that when she resumes she will have six minutes remaining in the time allotted for her remarks.

* * *

AUDITOR GENERAL'S REPORT

The Speaker: I have the honour to lay upon the table the first report of the Auditor General of Canada for the year 2006, with an addendum on environmental petitions, July 1, 2005 to January 3, 2006.

[*Translation*]

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(3)(g), this document is deemed to have been permanently referred to the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

*Statements by Members***STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS**

• (1400)

*[English]***ARDEN LEUNG**

Mr. John Cummins (Delta—Richmond East, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a respected resident of Ladner, British Columbia, and a former page of this place, Arden Leung, who passed away on March 13.

Arden was born in Hong Kong in 1963 and moved to British Columbia with his parents in 1973. Arden had fond memories of his time as a House of Commons page, meeting Pierre Trudeau, Joe Clark, Brian Mulroney and former Speaker Sauvé. He was present during the great debates on the Constitution.

A graduate of Carleton University, he studied law at Windsor, where he met his wife Kimberley. They became engaged six days after their first date, married in 1989 and practised law together. Always believing that it was important to give more to one's community than to take, Arden was actively involved as a community leader.

Arden's proudest accomplishment and greatest passion was his family. He is survived by his wife Kimberley and daughters Kelsey and Morgan.

I ask all members of the House to join me in honouring Arden Leung, a young man who began his adult life here as a House of Commons page.

* * *

MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY

Hon. Andrew Telegdi (Kitchener—Waterloo, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on July 22 Michelin will close its BF Goodrich tire plant in Kitchener and 1,100 workers will join the 150,000 people across Ontario who have lost their manufacturing jobs in the last two years. Michelin, whose profits surged 36% to over \$1 billion U.S. in 2005, said the closure was due to market oversupply and intense cost pressure from imports.

Most businesses will go where they can maximize profits. But as a government, it is our responsibility to protect Canadian jobs. We must be aware that the high value of the Canadian dollar hurts manufacturing jobs.

We must use tariffs to counter dumping. We must also avoid free trade agreements with countries that do not allow equal access to their markets and lack labour and environmental standards.

We must also help our workers going through transition with job searches, retraining and income support.

* * *

*[Translation]***NATIONAL PATRIOTS DAY**

Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Mr. Speaker, next Monday we will celebrate National Patriots Day. On this day, we will remember the battles fought by men and women who risked their lives to stand up for ideals of justice, equality and

freedom, and who bequeathed to us a fervent desire for emancipation.

The Patriots' battle continues to this day, but the circumstances have changed. Democracy has replaced bullets, and oppression has made way for the kind of majority rule that makes Quebecers a minority in a country that does not belong to them and in which governance decisions are made by others.

We must recognize the thousands of activists who are keeping up the fight for freedom as they follow in the footsteps of the Patriots along the road that leads to Quebec sovereignty.

On May 22 in Saint-Hyacinthe, Bernard Landry, a great Patriot and long-time activist, will be honoured. We want him to know that he continues to be a source of inspiration and energy, and that we will work together to win the Patriots' battle and attain Quebec sovereignty.

* * *

*[English]***BURNABY LAKE**

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Burnaby Lake is one of the jewels of the greater Vancouver area and is home to a wide and fascinating variety of waterfowl species. It is an important part of our quality of life. However, the years of silt coming in have taken its toll on the lake, which is becoming a marshland.

The city of Burnaby, under the leadership of Mayor Derek Corrigan, has been working to obtain federal funding to rejuvenate the lake. The city and the province have already committed to this.

Requests for revitalization funding were rejected by the then Liberal government, which alleged that lake rejuvenation was not part of the mandate of the federal program. Astoundingly, a similar lake revitalization project was approved for Wascana Lake in the riding of the former Liberal finance minister.

It is imperative that the Conservative government break away from the Liberal tradition of favouritism and establish infrastructure funding that is fair, equitable, not subject to political interference, and reflective of the needs of each and every community.

I am hopeful this will be one of the major accomplishments of this Parliament. I urge funding for the rejuvenation of this beautiful asset in our region.

* * *

CONSERVATIVE GOVERNMENT

Mr. Gerry Ritz (Battlefords—Lloydminster, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are getting excited about government again. They have seen our party do more in 13 weeks than the last guys did in 13 years, and they now realize Liberal mediocrity was just a bad dream.

In our first 100 days we released \$755 million for farmers and put another \$1.5 billion in this year's budget. We also cancelled the CAIS program clawbacks.

We have introduced a federal accountability act and legislation to get tough on crime. Both acts are long overdue.

Statements by Members

We have called an inquiry into the Air-India bombing, an act of terrorism long ignored by that last bunch.

We reached a softwood lumber agreement and a residential schools settlement, both of which had been stalled for years.

We did not make empty promises about tax cuts. We have delivered by cutting the GST to 6%, raising the basic personal exemption and allowing tradespeople to deduct the cost of their equipment. We cut the immigration landing fee in half and announced a process for recognizing foreign credentials.

This is only a short list in a short time, but it is a promise of better things ahead.

* * *

● (1405)

CHIEF FRANCIS FLETT

Ms. Tina Keeper (Churchill, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the life of Chief Francis Flett of the Opaskwayak Cree Nation in Churchill riding. He passed away on March 9, 2006 after a lengthy battle with diabetes. It was my honour to join his family and 2,000 people at Opaskwayak Cree Nation to remember the life of a tireless leader and a courageous advocate of treaty rights.

His political career spanned decades, having served as a chief and councillor, as Grand Chief of Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakinak and as Manitoba Regional Vice-Chief for the Assembly of First Nations.

His contributions were invaluable. He always upheld treaty rights as the foundation for future generations. He championed issues of child welfare, health, justice and citizenship for first nations.

I add that Chief Flett always held deep respect for the Conservative member of Parliament for Dauphin—Swan River—Marquette. In former political roles, they had worked to address jurisdictional issues on health care.

Chief Flett had the ability to lead with conviction and to serve with humility. Whether one was a federal or provincial leader or a trapper in remote northern Manitoba, Francis Flett always made the time to listen.

I ask all hon. members to join me in honouring his memory.

* * *

MUSICFEST CANADA

Mr. Ed Komarnicki (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Estevan Comprehensive School Symphonic Winds and the Jazz Ensemble travelled 2,400 kilometres by bus from Estevan, Saskatchewan to be in Ottawa to take part in the 34th Annual MusicFest Canada National Concert and Jazz Band finals.

The bands' participation in this festival is a result of being awarded an invitation for their excellent performance at the Optimist Band Festival in Regina. This is the bands' 15th appearance at the national festival where they have consistently received gold and silver awards for their performances.

Under the direction of Colin Grunert, the band program has grown from 47 to over 300 students. The school has three jazz ensembles and three concert bands.

Colin was the first ever recipient of the Keith Mann Memorial Award as the Outstanding Band Director in Canada in 2002. This was made possible with the outstanding support of the community, the school board, administration, staff, students, parents, and his wife of 26 years, Stacy, along with their four children, Patrick, Sheena, Alyssa and Matthew.

I conclude with the words of Plato, "Music is a more potent instrument than any other for education, because rhythm and harmony find their way into the inward places of the soul".

* * *

[*Translation*]

TROIS-RIVIÈRES SYMPHONY

Ms. Paule Brunelle (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to report how proud Trifluvians are at the appointment of Jacques Lacombe to the position of artistic director and conductor of the Trois-Rivières symphony orchestra.

Heralded at the start of his career as one of the most promising conductors of his generation, Jacques Lacombe conquered the international stage with his artistic integrity and natural working relationship with orchestras.

Born in Cap-de-la-Madeleine, Jacques Lacombe studied at the Trois-Rivières and Montreal conservatories of music. He was assistant conductor with the Montreal Symphony Orchestra under Charles Dutoit. He has also performed as guest conductor with many orchestras in Europe and North America.

The Bloc Québécois honours Jacques Lacombe and the Trois-Rivières symphony orchestra for their contribution to the development of Trois-Rivières, a historic and cultural centre.

* * *

[*English*]

AUDITOR GENERAL'S REPORT

Mr. Barry Devolin (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today's report by the Auditor General sheds further light on serious abuses of public trust by the previous Liberal government.

First of all, the Auditor General highlights even more wasteful spending for the billion dollar gun registry than was previously known. Second, and this is something that is even more disturbing, the Auditor General also illustrates how the Liberal government kept Parliament, indeed all Canadians, in the dark about some of these costs. That is shameful and unacceptable.

The good news for Canadian taxpayers is that help is on the way. Canada's new Conservative government is committed to making Ottawa more effective and more accountable.

Statements by Members

Starting with the federal accountability act, we are taking action to earn back the trust of Canadians. As we mark the 100th day in office for this Conservative government, I am pleased to say that we are well into the job of cleaning up Ottawa.

Never again should Canadians be subjected to a government that wastes their money and then hides that information from them.

* * *

● (1410)

CANADA-U.S. BORDER

Ms. Ruby Dhalla (Brampton—Springdale, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is a growing concern regarding the western hemisphere travel initiative that will make the use of passports mandatory when travelling across the Canada-U.S. border.

This will significantly impact Canadian businesses and the Canadian tourism industry. Border towns and duty free shops are already experiencing a significant drop in revenues as travellers are very hesitant to cross the border.

In fact, the Canadian Tourism Commission states that between 2005 and 2008 with this initiative a possible loss of \$1.7 billion could result to the tourism sector.

The Prime Minister has failed to make any progress on this important issue during the Cancun summit or in his subsequent meetings with American counterparts. He seems to be busy listening to American pollsters and strategists and succumbing to every made in the U.S.A. solution.

He needs to wake up and he needs to start representing Canadians because he is the Canadian Prime Minister and not the American ambassador to Canada.

So I ask, will he stand up for Canadians? Because Canadians want action now and they want results on this important issue.

* * *

AUDITOR GENERAL'S REPORT

Mr. John Williams (Edmonton—St. Albert, CPC): Mr. Speaker, another Auditor General's report and another litany of Liberal mismanagement, waste and incompetence.

The Liberals fudged the figures on the gun registry. They hired lawyers to tell the accountants how to massage the numbers. Shocking, Mr. Speaker.

The Liberals continued to supply prescription drugs to our first nations people with no procedures to stop them from being resold on the street or to prevent abuse and overdose. Disgraceful, Mr. Speaker.

The lease on office space for the Economic Development Agency in Montreal expired and EDA was to move to lower cost space. The secretary of state for the agency wrote to the Minister of Public Works and Government Services and what happened? EDA stayed in the high cost space and a lease was signed on the low cost space to avoid a lawsuit. Disgusting, Mr. Speaker.

However, I am glad to say that the Liberals are out and the Conservatives who are focused on accountability are in.

SKIN CANCER

Ms. Penny Priddy (Surrey North, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am rising in the House today to invite all respected members of Parliament to a very special event. The Chuck Cadman Memorial Skin Cancer Screening and Reception, hosted by the Canadian Dermatology Association, will be held this evening in memory of a loyal Canadian MP and a personal friend. Chuck passed away on July 9, 2005 after a two year battle with melanoma skin cancer.

More than 60,000 Canadians are diagnosed with skin cancer each year. This evening's event is being held to increase awareness about the warning signs of cancer and to remind us all to check for symptoms of this disease. Mrs. Dona Cadman is with us today and will be at the screening and reception. She has a brand new two-week-old baby granddaughter whose name is Teadora.

Please join us from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. in West Block, room 200. Everyone is welcome. Please come.

* * *

PRAIRIE GIANT

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Wascana, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, a recent CBC mini-series entitled *Prairie Giant* portrayed the political life and times of former Premier Tommy Douglas of Saskatchewan. In many ways this movie is a highly interesting story of a very colourful personality during an important period in Saskatchewan's history.

Many people of different political persuasions think very highly of Mr. Douglas, and rightly so. But the movie contains a major historical error in its negative and mistaken depiction of another prominent figure of the era, the hon. James G. Gardiner. These mistakes have been well documented by many journalists and academics, like Dr. David Smith, as well as New Democrats like Allen Blakeney and Ed Broadbent.

In fact, the character identified as "Jimmy Gardiner" in the film is a fictional concoction, totally contrived. The CBC should ensure that viewers of this production know that it is not a documentary and the portrayal therein of James G. Gardiner is incorrect and untrue.

* * *

[Translation]

MANUFACTURING SECTOR

Mr. Guy André (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Our manufacturing sector is hard hit by the effects of globalization. The increased value of the Canadian dollar and strong competition by emerging countries have both contributed to significant job losses in recent years. In Quebec, in 2005 alone, over 33,000 jobs were lost in the manufacturing sector.

The riding of Berthier—Maskinongé has a very large furniture manufacturing sector. In Quebec, between 2002 and 2005, globalization resulted in the loss of some 5,000 jobs in this industry.

While it has the duty to intervene, this government, like the Liberal government, has decided to not provide a plan of assistance. Vigorous measures are needed, because the inaction of the federal government will lead to the loss of thousands of jobs in the manufacturing sector.

* * *

• (1415)

[English]

NUNAVUT AWARENESS

Ms. Nancy Karetak-Lindell (Nunavut, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today is a special day for parliamentarians. Premier Paul Okalik and cabinet colleagues are hosting Nunavut Awareness on the Hill. I thank all members who came to the open house.

By sharing information and raising awareness of Nunavut, Premier Okalik and his cabinet colleagues will bring to the attention of parliamentarians the important issues currently facing Nunavummiut. Housing is key to the future advancement of Inuit. Severe overcrowding is making it very difficult for our people to lead healthy lives as do other Canadians.

I ask the government to reconsider its decision on the Kelowna accord and to implement the recommendations of Thomas Berger in regard to the Nunavut land claim and education in Nunavut. Nunavut has many resources and opportunities to contribute to our country, but the unique challenges we face need a special understanding by the federal government.

* * *

CONSERVATIVE GOVERNMENT

Mr. Joe Preston (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians voted for change. This new Conservative government is just 100 days young and the Prime Minister did not just talk about what he would accomplish, he delivered.

The federal accountability act, committed and delivered. Legislation to get tough on crime, committed and delivered. Support for our farmers, committed and delivered. A softwood lumber agreement supported by the provinces, committed and delivered. Residential schools settlement, committed and delivered. Cutting the immigration landing fee, committed and delivered. The Air-India inquiry, committed and delivered. The GST cut 1%, committed and delivered. Choice in child care, committed and delivered.

In 100 days this government has delivered. Canadians voted for change and we have delivered change that is good for business, good for families and good for all Canadians.

Oral Questions

ORAL QUESTIONS

[English]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Hon. Bill Graham (Leader of the Opposition, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it seems that the delivery for the Minister of the Environment's script for the Bonn meeting on climate change must have been taken by the government from the theatre of the absurd. She spoke of our Arctic, of melting permafrost, changes in our sea ice and the arrival of new migratory animal species. At last Conservatives get it, we thought. They see we need action. They have flipped from their animosity. However, no, instead the minister flopped again. She called for leniency, longer deadlines and weaker objectives.

If the government is genuinely concerned about the impact of global warming on our Arctic, why is its policy that Canada do less?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the theatre of the absurd is the Leader of the Opposition talking about Kyoto with the record of his party, a party that committed Canada to international targets which his government had absolutely no intention of even trying to reach, and missed by them 35%.

We have a bright, young, aggressive Minister of the Environment who is going to get on with some real action.

Hon. Bill Graham (Leader of the Opposition, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that must be small comfort to the people of Nunavut and their representatives who are here with us in Ottawa today.

Members of the House must be comparing Canada's performance in Bonn with Montreal this past December. In Montreal, Canada worked tirelessly behind the scenes to bring the world together to take real action to fight climate change. In Bonn we are sending the message that Canada is not reliable in the fight against climate change. Other countries are describing Canada's desertion as a living nightmare.

Canada has a leadership role to play in the fight against global warming. Why is the government abandoning that role?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as the House knows, the party opposite did absolutely nothing on this issue when it was in government, other than spend several billion dollars to absolutely no effect whatsoever. So bad was its record, let me read this quote:

This is a government that could not organize a two car funeral, let alone implement a Kyoto agreement in terms of domestic engagement within Canada.

That statement was made by his own environment critic about his own government.

Oral Questions

● (1420)

[Translation]

Hon. Bill Graham (Leader of the Opposition, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, speaking of funerals, this Prime Minister is acting like a mere onlooker as his ministers continue to blunder. He gave his Minister of Foreign Affairs the thankless task of not issuing a real apology to the leader of la Francophonie. And now, his Minister of the Environment is questioning our leadership in matters of the environment. Speaking of the dangers of global warming, she wants the Kyoto targets to be reduced.

When will the Prime Minister assure the House that he takes our international commitments seriously?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the answer is the same in French. The official opposition party did nothing for climate change when it was in power.

I have full confidence in the Minister of the Environment. I gave her this government's biggest task, namely, to create a real plan after the Liberal government's miserable failure.

* * *

FRANCOPHONIE

Mr. Bernard Patry (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this government does not seem to be concerned by the fact that Canada is losing face on the international scene.

In Senegal, the *Rencontre africaine pour la défense des droits de l'homme* described as purely racist the search of His Excellency Abdou Diouf, the secretary general of the Organisation internationale de la Francophonie.

Yesterday the minister did not respond when asked what she had to do that was more important than welcoming the international representative of la Francophonie.

Through you, Mr. Speaker, I am asking again: where was she?

Hon. Josée Verner (Minister of International Cooperation and Minister for la Francophonie and Official Languages, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is deplorable that the hon. opposition member thinks that the welcome by the Franco-Manitoban community was not a Canadian welcome. He should talk about this with his colleague, who was there.

Mr. Diouf himself—

The Speaker: Order. The hon. Minister of International Cooperation has the floor and it is impossible to hear her. Order.

She has the floor.

Hon. Josée Verner: Mr. Diouf himself commented on the warm welcome he received from the federal and provincial authorities.

That said, the conference was a success and that is what we should focus on.

Mr. Bernard Patry (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is not about the welcome in Manitoba, but the welcome in Toronto. There is a difference.

I hope the minister will travel abroad frequently in the weeks and months to come in order to gain a better understanding of her role as

minister and of the protocol for receiving foreign dignitaries from the moment they arrive at the airport.

Given the negative international impact on Canada as a result of this incident, would it not be simpler for the Minister for la Francophonie to go to Paris herself and offer Mr. Diouf not her regrets but a sincere and official apology? This would put an end to this faux pas committed by the government.

Hon. Josée Verner (Minister of International Cooperation and Minister for la Francophonie and Official Languages, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I do not know where the hon. member has been for the past few weeks or what he had that was more important to do. However, as Minister of International Cooperation and Minister for la Francophonie, I met with Mr. Diouf last March in Paris. This was my first official trip.

That said, the conference in Saint Boniface was a great success and allowed the Franco-Manitoban community to show its vitality.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the international community now knows the Canadian government's real intentions with respect to the Kyoto protocol. At the conference on climate change in Bonn, the Minister of the Environment announced that Canada would not reach the Kyoto targets. Germany and a number of environmental groups publicly condemned Canada's position.

How can the Prime Minister go ahead with a position on the Kyoto protocol that the international community has discredited?

● (1425)

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I think that the international community knows that not only Canada, but the international community in general will not reach the Kyoto targets. That is why we are taking part in talks to achieve better results in future. It was the former government that decided to accept targets that it was unable to reach and did not try to reach. In future, this government will take action instead.

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, instead of taking a page from the Americans' book, the government should learn from Europe, which has reduced its greenhouse gas emissions, and Germany, which has already reached its target. It would do better to learn from these countries.

This evening, the House of Commons will vote on a Bloc Québécois motion calling on the government to meet the Kyoto protocol targets. When he was the leader of the official opposition, the Prime Minister frequently criticized the Liberal government because it did not abide by votes of the House of Commons.

Now that he is on the other side of the House, does the Prime Minister intend to abide by the members' decision on the Kyoto protocol, as expressed in the vote this evening?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois motion is not an action plan, but this government intends to create an action plan.

Oral Questions

The hon. member and leader of the Bloc Québécois talks about the international community and Kyoto. The reality is that India, China, the United States, Australia and Mexico have no targets and will not reach the Kyoto targets. That is why we are working with the international community: to get real results.

Mr. Bernard Bigras (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Canada lost face yesterday at the Bonn conference on climate change since the government rejected the Kyoto protocol and the minister was not able to fool anyone with her *laissez-faire* strategy.

Will this government acknowledge that by rejecting the Kyoto protocol it has shown, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that it has chosen the other strategy, the *laissez-faire* strategy of President Bush?

[*English*]

Mr. Mark Warawa (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the minister's meetings in Bonn were very successful. The minister had the opportunity to put Canada's position forward in an honest and forthright manner to ensure our international partners understood that the mess was provided by the former Liberal government.

The international partners are supportive of our commitment to provide a made in Canada plan.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Bernard Bigras (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House we do not have the same perspective on the conference.

By abandoning the Kyoto protocol and adopting the Bush administrations's strategy—one that permits targets to be met on a voluntary basis—is the Prime Minister not aligning himself more than ever with the oil companies, and singling himself out as the one who gave in to the oil lobby against the environment?

[*English*]

Mr. Mark Warawa (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I said, our international partners are very supportive of our made in Canada plan. The minister had the opportunity to share—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order, please. I can hear a lot of supplementary questions, but we are getting the answer to the first supplementary now. Hon. members will have to wait their turn to ask questions later. The parliamentary secretary has the floor for an answer and members will want to hear him.

[*Translation*]

All the members want to hear him. Order, please.

The honourable parliamentary secretary.

[*English*]

Mr. Mark Warawa: Mr. Speaker, the minister had the opportunity to share in Bonn our commitment to show real action on this issue. With the first part of our made in Canada plan, our renewable fuels strategy will be launched next week in Regina.

● (1430)

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Hon. Jack Layton (Toronto—Danforth, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in days following the last election, the government, without any consultation, doubled our commitment of troops in Afghanistan to 2,000 men and women. Then the Minister of National Defence had to indicate that “because of this decision, Canada is greatly challenged for a substantial commitment elsewhere”.

When making this decision, did the Prime Minister realize that this would render Canada incapable of responding to other situations in the world in making other commitments, including peacekeeping? If not, why not?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): First, Mr. Speaker, the government did not make the decision to send the troops that are there today. That was made by the former government, although we support that decision and support our troops in the field.

We understand that a commitment of this magnitude creates some real constraints on our ability elsewhere. At the moment, however, including the situation in Sudan, we do not expect the need for large scale commitments of Canadian troops elsewhere. That is why we will ask the House tomorrow to back our decision to continue to send a significant Canadian contingent to Afghanistan and to accomplish the work of the international community there.

Hon. Jack Layton (Toronto—Danforth, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is confirming that we will indeed be compromised in our ability to respond to large scale situations elsewhere in the world. It is important that all Canadians know that.

For months, the Prime Minister has been saying that there is no need for a vote on Afghanistan because there is no new mission. Now we learn there is to be a vote on the situation in Afghanistan and our involvement.

Is tomorrow night an about face on the Prime Minister's policy or are we dealing with a new mission? By the way, does he believe that providing 36 hours of notice for a debate on a two year commitment of our troops is the proper way to make foreign policy?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Parliament of Canada, unfortunately, has never actually taken a position through a vote on this issue. It is appropriate that it do so at some time. Members of the House and the parties of the House have had five years to decide what their position is on this mission. We want to be sure that our troops have the support of this Parliament going forward.

Yes, it is a large and important commitment. What we are doing there is not just protecting our national interest. We are providing international leadership and some real advancement to the standard of living and to the human rights of the Afghan people. These are important things for which Canada should stand.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Hon. Marlene Jennings (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our international reputation should be important to this government. Yet, it suffered a serious blow yesterday in Bonn. Despite everything, this government stubbornly clings to its made-in-the-U.S.A. policy of inaction.

The German environment minister publicly denounced the Canadian Minister of the Environment, saying that, with six years still to go before reaching the Kyoto targets, Canada should not be throwing in the towel.

Yesterday, it was Senegal. Today it is Germany. How long can this government go on tarnishing Canada's reputation internationally?

[English]

Mr. Mark Warawa (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after the environment minister shared the mess that the Liberal government left this country in with regard to the environment, it now understands our position.

Our renewable fuel strategy is the first part of our made in Canada plan and the fulfillment of this government's commitment to put Canadians first. This government is developing a made in Canada plan that will have real results and achievable results on the environment.

[Translation]

Hon. Marlene Jennings (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians will not be fooled. Here are some headlines from today's newspapers. From the daily *Le Devoir*: "Canada loses face in Bonn". From *La Presse*: "Climate change: Berlin snubs Canada".

Yesterday, the German environment minister said that Canada could still meet its Kyoto targets.

Why did this government cancel made-in-Canada programs such as EnerGuide and replace them with a made-in-the-U.S.A. policy of giving up?

[English]

Mr. Mark Warawa (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the real question is: Why did that party keep from the Canadian public what was happening on the Kyoto targets? It knew for the last five years that those targets were not achievable and that it was 35% above those targets. Why did that party keep that from the Canadian public?

* * *

• (1435)

[Translation]

ENERGUIDE PROGRAM

Hon. Dan McTeague (Pickering—Scarborough East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last week the Minister of Natural Resources said that nearly half of every dollar spent on the EnerGuide program was used to pay for home inspections and overhead costs and was never distributed to homeowners.

According to the minister's rationale, should program officials have set up a tent on a street corner to distribute cheques to every passerby?

[English]

Hon. Gary Lunn (Minister of Natural Resources, CPC): No, Mr. Speaker. Maybe the old Liberal Party decided to stand on street corners and hand out cheques as we saw through many of its programs. Quite often they were envelopes of cash.

The facts are with EnerGuide that 50¢ of every dollar went to administration inspections. That is not efficient for an energy efficient program and that is not how this government is going to do business.

Hon. Dan McTeague (Pickering—Scarborough East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thought the hon. member was referring to the affair under Mr. Mulrone with respect to Airbus.

Let me ask the hon. member if I could actually do the same thing for what it is worth.

The minister assured me that Canadians who were already approved for funding before the budget cut the EnerGuide program would still receive their grant. Why then is his department website saying that this is subject to the availability of funding?

Will Canadians who are approved by his own department get their funding or not? Will the hon. minister now explain this contradiction?

Hon. Gary Lunn (Minister of Natural Resources, CPC): Mr. Speaker, if the member opposite wants to stand up and talk about scandals and affairs, the list from his own party is very long. From the sponsorship program, to HRDC, to the gun registry, the list goes on and on. The old Liberal Party had a reputation for creating billion dollar programs with no accountability.

This party is committed to accountability. With respect to EnerGuide, anybody who is in the program we will honour that commitment.

* * *

[Translation]

FRANCOPHONIE

Mrs. Vivian Barbot (Papineau, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in addition to embarrassing us internationally at the conference on the environment, the government is making the headlines around the world because of its unacceptable treatment of the secretary general of la Francophonie. Canada's behaviour has been criticized in *Le Figaro*, *Le Monde* and the magazine *Jeune Afrique*, among others.

How can the Government of Canada remain indifferent to a formal request for an apology from the government of Senegal?

Hon. Josée Verner (Minister of International Cooperation and Minister for la Francophonie and Official Languages, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Mr. Diouf repeated many times that the federal and provincial authorities had given him a warm welcome. He was particularly pleased with the outcome of the conference in which representatives of francophone governments from around the world took part. This is what we should remember about the conference.

Oral Questions

Mrs. Vivian Barbot (Papineau, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would point out to the hon. member opposite that Mr. Diouf is not the government of Senegal and that it is indeed the government of Senegal, through its ambassador, that is calling for an apology.

Since 1988, under the Agence de la Francophonie and the Institut de l'énergie et de l'environnement de la Francophonie Privileges and Immunities Order and the Vienna convention, the Government of Canada accords diplomatic status to officials of la Francophonie.

Will the government acknowledge that, had its minister been present to welcome the secretary general, the regrettable conduct could have been avoided—

The Speaker: I am sorry to have to interrupt the hon. member.

The hon. Minister of International Cooperation.

Hon. Josée Verner (Minister of International Cooperation and Minister for la Francophonie and Official Languages, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to see that the Bloc member is interested in Canada's international reputation.

The hon. member was in Saint-Boniface. She was therefore able to share in the warm welcome given Mr. Diouf by Canada, Manitoba and the Franco-Manitoban community.

* * *

SOFTWOOD LUMBER

Mr. Pierre Paquette (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in response to a question from the Leader of the Bloc Québécois last Thursday, the Prime Minister said that no bill to implement tax on the export of softwood lumber would be tabled before the text of the agreement is finalized. Yesterday, in committee, the Minister for International Trade said that he intended to table the bill in spring without making any reference to the final agreement.

Can the Prime Minister confirm in this House that there will be no bill implementing a tax on softwood lumber exports as long as the agreement is not finalized?

• (1440)

[*English*]

Hon. David Emerson (Minister of International Trade and Minister for the Pacific Gateway and the Vancouver-Whistler Olympics, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what I was explaining yesterday, when we were talking about this in committee, was that there would be a requirement for a ways and means motion which would enable an export tax to be put in place so that revenues could flow back to those provinces to enhance the economic prospects of the industries in those areas.

The timing of that bill is uncertain at this time. We think we will have a finalized agreement before Parliament rises in June.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Paquette (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, will the Prime Minister agree that the debate and passing of a bill to implement tax on exports before the softwood lumber agreement is finalized and accepted by the industry would send an odd signal to the Americans, suggesting that Canada is prepared to accept anything and would prejudge the final result of the negotiation?

[*English*]

Hon. David Emerson (Minister of International Trade and Minister for the Pacific Gateway and the Vancouver-Whistler Olympics, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I do not really think the softwood lumber industry in Canada nor the working families that are involved in the softwood lumber industry want this dispute to carry on for months and months, into the summer and into the fall. That is exactly what we are trying to avoid with this settlement. We are trying to restore predictability and certainty and we need to move ahead in a timely manner to ensure the softwood lumber industry in Canada is strong and competitive.

* * *

CANADA-U.S. BORDER

Mr. John Maloney (Welland, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today I am meeting with the Niagara River Bi-National Border Mayors' Coalition about U.S. passport requirements. My region is very concerned about this initiative.

The blow to tourism has been estimated at nearly \$1 billion in the U.S. and twice that in Canada. Border congestion could cripple our crossings with detrimental effects for manufacturers, importers and exporters.

It is unclear why the Prime Minister continues to allow our border policy to be made in the U.S.A. When will the government stand up for Canadian business and tourism?

Hon. Stockwell Day (Minister of Public Safety, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it would be more helpful if the member opposite and his colleagues, who ignored this problem for two years, would report on the progress that is being made. I will be meeting with the Niagara mayors this afternoon.

The Prime Minister has made this a priority. We now have officials working with U.S. officials to see which documents will be acceptable for Canadians. We have already moved them to the position that alternative documents will be acceptable. We have had our MPs on this side of the floor working with the border caucuses in the United States. We have alerted governors to the problem. They have action plans in place. We are supporting amendments in the United States. We have premiers on side.

Why do they not report the good news that we are getting something done on this file.

Mr. John Maloney (Welland, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the minister well knows, it was the Liberal government that submitted an official response to the Americans on the western hemisphere travel initiative warning them about the mutual effects of changes to documents required at our borders.

It was the Liberal government's aggressive campaign that fought for Canadians to ensure that the U.S. passport requirements did not negatively impact trade and travel at our borders, including assurances about the Nexus and FAST programs.

Oral Questions

The only strategy the present government favours is capitulation. Why does the government continue to have no plan?

Hon. Stockwell Day (Minister of Public Safety, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I do not know where the member of Parliament was for two years when we asked the Liberal government to take action on this initiative and it did nothing. It was members of this party and members of other opposition parties who finally forced a debate on the issue. One of the first priorities our Prime Minister made was to make this a top level item at Cancun.

We have made great progress. I talked with Secretary Chertoff again yesterday on this and the Minister of Foreign Affairs talked with Condoleezza Rice on it yesterday. The Americans know our concerns. We are making progress for Canadians. Those people over there did nothing.

Hon. Raymond Chan (Richmond, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the previous Liberal government set the standard to speed up border crossings with programs like Nexus and FAST. The Liberal government launched a debate about the use of biometrics to comply with U.S. standards but the Conservatives loudly opposed a made in Canada solution.

Could the minister explain to Canadians why, after 15 years of sitting on their hands in opposition, they have no plan of their own to address the crisis at our borders?

• (1445)

Hon. Stockwell Day (Minister of Public Safety, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it has been said that we should introduce a little levity in this place to change the atmosphere a bit. Talk about 13 years of sitting on their hands doing nothing, that is exactly what those members did and now, because of our initiative, Canadians are working from coast to coast on this issue with our American counterparts to get the message across.

We already have an agreement that there will be alternative documents that will be acceptable. We are in the process of defining those. I will tell members how successful it has been. All across the country people are working on this. Even the Liberals are starting to care about it now.

Hon. Raymond Chan (Richmond, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if that is the case, why did the Prime Minister, in his first meeting with Mr. Bush, throw up his hands and say that it was already a done deal? Canadians are tired of the government's inaction on this file and want real answers, not Republican Party spin.

Why does the minister refuse to act while premiers and border mayors are aggressively trying to save their communities?

Hon. Stockwell Day (Minister of Public Safety, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it really does not matter how many times we say it. We are working with the people across the country from coast to coast who are making an impression and who are getting the job done. Amendments are in place and they are being sent to the U.S. Congress, amendments that have been encouraged by the work of our Prime Minister and others.

It would help if those members would get on side but they did not help for 13 years. We really do not need them because Canadians from coast to coast are doing this. When they talk about throwing up,

I think they are reflecting on the policy that they have had for the last 13 years.

* * *

FIREARMS REGISTRY

Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Auditor General has reported on what we have suspected for years. The cost of the gun registry continues to spiral out of control. The Auditor General's 2002 report criticized Liberal spending. At that time the former prime minister said, "We have to make sure it does not happen again. It is simply inexcusable". However he and his Liberal government continued to fail to keep costs under control.

Could the Minister of Public Safety tell us how the Liberals managed to fail so completely and misspend millions of taxpayer dollars?

Hon. Stockwell Day (Minister of Public Safety, CPC): Mr. Speaker, taking some of the excerpts from Sheila Fraser's report, it reminded me of the many comments made by the member for Yorkton—Melville over the years. He warned about this. Did the Liberals listen?

Ms. Fraser talked about the Liberals going to great lengths to hide the true cost. Did they listen? No. She talked about cost overruns that were incredible. Did they listen? No. She talked about the fact that there were no written records of key meetings. Did they listen? No. She talked about the fact that they used lawyers to deny her key information. Did they listen? No. She talked about the fact that there was a lack of performance standards and that the lack of performance standards put our officers at risk. Did they listen? No.

Are we going to fix the problem? Yes.

* * *

DAVID DINGWALL

Mr. David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it appears as if we have another case of the Conservatives acting just like the Liberals. Yesterday the documents on the David Dingwall affair were finally released. Lo and behold, major parts were blacked out and still remain secret.

I would like to ask the government because in opposition it demanded that this information be released. Now that the Conservatives are in government their tune has changed.

I want to ask the government the very same question it asked, when it comes to David Dingwall what is the government trying to hide?

Hon. John Baird (President of the Treasury Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government is more than prepared to table any and all information that it is legally entitled to table.

We know two things. First, the House was misled when it was told of the status of Mr. Dingwall's employment and how it came to an end.

It was this government that sought to release the information in the first place. It is this government that will continue to do that, to provide open and transparent government to the people of this country.

• (1450)

Mr. David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, that sounds an awful lot like the same answers we received from the other side for all those years.

Mr. Dingwall says he is entitled to his entitlements. Apparently the government thinks it is entitled to black out massive portions of an important document that it promised to release in full.

Will the minister admit that, first, the Liberals were right to hide information on the Dingwall affair from the Canadian people or, second, that his government has done a major flip-flop on the issue of secrecy?

Hon. John Baird (President of the Treasury Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I say to my friend from Hamilton Centre that we will not defend the lack of transparency in the previous government.

The Conservative government is the government that put forward the truth on the issue surrounding Mr. Dingwall and his departure on the eve of an election. It was the Conservative government that committed to and has delivered on releasing every single aspect of this issue that can be legally made public and will continue to do so.

* * *

EQUALIZATION PAYMENTS

Hon. John McCallum (Markham—Unionville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, already this—

The Speaker: Order, please. It is clear that all hon. members want to hear the member for Markham—Unionville. With the noise, I am apprehensive that no one will be able to hear the hon. member.

The hon. member for Markham—Unionville has the floor.

Hon. John McCallum: Mr. Speaker, as I was saying, the finance minister has already broken the Prime Minister's promise to honour the Canada-Ontario agreement. He has reneged by withholding \$384 million last year and by cancelling funds for phasing out coal.

Will the minister at least commit today that every penny of the \$6.9 billion will go to the Government of Ontario, as opposed to deceptively including funds for tax credits that people will receive in any case?

Hon. Jim Flaherty (Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we committed two weeks ago in this place, when the budget of the government came forward, to fully fund the Canada-Ontario agreement over six years to the tune of \$6.8 billion.

That commitment stands. That is a commitment of the government. We keep our commitments, unlike the members opposite. The member opposite still has not decided whether Dingwall resigned voluntarily or not.

Hon. John McCallum (Markham—Unionville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this homeless, jailing, extreme finance minister never answers the question.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

I am trying again by asking a very simple question.

Can the minister confirm that every dollar of the \$6.9 billion will be paid directly to the Government of Ontario? Yes or no?

[English]

Hon. Jim Flaherty (Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am sure the member opposite understands why it is difficult to take him seriously from time to time.

I will say this, we will honour the agreement. We are committed to the agreement, unlike when the Liberals were the government and made various commitments that they did not keep.

We brought in a focused budget that kept our priority commitments to the people of Canada, including the Government of Ontario and all the people of Ontario.

* * *

PUBLIC WORKS AND GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Hon. Navdeep Bains (Mississauga—Brampton South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Public Works and his parliamentary secretary need to get their stories straight.

Last week the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Works denied that any sort of deal had taken place between Public Works and Minto Developments for the former JDS Uniphase site, only to be contradicted by the Minister of Public Works who confirmed that a letter of intent had in fact been signed.

Did the parliamentary secretary give the House bad information or is he just out of the loop?

Mr. James Moore (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Works and Government Services and Minister for the Pacific Gateway and the Vancouver-Whistler Olympics, CPC): Mr. Speaker, at one time the member opposite was on the government side of the House. When he was here, he should know there is a difference between a letter of intent, an agreement in principle, and Treasury Board approval. In fact, there has not been a formal deal put forward and approved on the former JDS Uniphase building.

Hon. Navdeep Bains (Mississauga—Brampton South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that is the problem with an unaccountable minister in another place.

This is a secret deal. This building was worth \$30 million when the Liberals were in power and now the taxpayers are paying approximately \$600 million. Who is pocketing the money? Or who is pocketing the difference, \$570 million?

Oral Questions

●(1455)

Mr. James Moore (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Works and Government Services and Minister for the Pacific Gateway and the Vancouver-Whistler Olympics, CPC): Mr. Speaker, if it is a secret deal, how does he arrive at the number of \$600 million? This is, again, Liberals just inventing information as the NDP critic did before. Here is the simple fact for the member opposite. There is no deal on the JDS Uniphase building that has been approved by Treasury Board. There is no deal.

* * *

[Translation]

PASSPORTS

Mr. Serge Ménard (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, BQ): Mr. Speaker, at the Cancun summit, the Prime Minister accepted as a done deal the decision by the United States to require the use of passports at its borders, contrary to the statements by the Minister of Public Safety yesterday. Yet everyone thinks this is a bad decision.

Will the minister see reason, take the position of the Government of Quebec, four provincial premiers and the governors of New England, and wage a real battle against mandatory passports?

Hon. Stockwell Day (Minister of Public Safety, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I do not know where the member gets his notes from. What he says is not true at all. The Prime Minister stated that this situation was unacceptable. It is unacceptable that Americans or Canadians should have trouble crossing the border. That is why we have proposed a solution. We are very happy that provincial premiers such as Mr. Charest agree with us.

Mr. Serge Ménard (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in a speech to the Canadian Association of New York on Monday, the Canadian ambassador warned the Bush administration, as the governors and the Premier of Quebec have done, against the negative impact of requiring passports at its borders.

What is the Prime Minister waiting for to explain to President Bush that this measure is expensive for both countries and useless from a security standpoint?

Hon. Stockwell Day (Minister of Public Safety, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am glad that the hon. member mentioned our ambassador. He is working with us, of course, and we have proposed solutions. We have approached the Americans with solutions and will continue to do so, particularly with the help of our ambassador, the governors and the members in this House. We will reach a solution.

* * *

[English]

FIREARMS REGISTRY

Hon. Irwin Cotler (Mount Royal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, given that the Auditor General determined today that notable progress has been made in the management and operation of the Canada Firearms Centre since it has been established as an independent department, and given that police and law enforcement authorities, public safety groups and victims' groups have otherwise affirmed that the firearms registry works, that it has deterred crime, that it has saved lives, why would the government seek to dismantle the vital component of a

law enforcement and gun control regime that in fact protects public security, protects public safety and saves Canadians' lives?

Hon. Stockwell Day (Minister of Public Safety, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I can only reflect on what the Auditor General herself said. I am surprised that the member, who usually presents a fairly cogent picture of the reality of the situation, has been sadly misled here.

Yes, it is true that the Auditor General mentioned that there have been some management improvements, but overall it has been a \$1 billion disaster. She talks about the fact that the former government went to great lengths to hide the facts from her. She talks about the fact that it hired lawyers to deny information from her. The member did not mention that homicide rates in the last two years have gone up. It has been a \$1 billion disaster.

* * *

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, for over a decade Liberal governments have starved our military of necessary resources. The Auditor General confirmed today that recruitment and retention have suffered, and our armed forces are short of necessary personnel.

Can the Minister of National Defence tell us what this government is doing for the Canadian armed forces?

Hon. Gordon O'Connor (Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, according to the Auditor General's report today regarding recruiting, this whole matter rests with the sad legacy of the Liberals. Basically, they underfunded the military for over a decade. That caused massive attrition in our military.

When the Liberals tried to turn the corner and said they would rebuild the military, they did not provide any money for recruiting, so it rests with the Liberals.

We, on the other hand, will deliver. We will deliver the money that is needed for the armed forces and we will build them to the strength we promised.

* * *

●(1500)

CANADA-U.S. BORDER

Mr. Tony Martin (Sault Ste. Marie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the new rules allowing the accessing of emergency passports is clearly discriminatory to people living in rural, northern and remote areas.

Not allowing MPs to process requests for urgent passports is setting up a two tier system. People now have to travel hundreds of miles and appear in person in a passport office to access an emergency passport.

When will the government stop caving in to U.S. security interests and concerns, and start serving all Canadians equally?

Oral Questions

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this has absolutely nothing to do with American concerns. This has to do with Canadian passport decision making.

We are undertaking a comprehensive review of how we will deal with passports, given the current situation because of the western hemisphere travel initiative. We will be making some decisions and announcements on this in the near future.

Mr. Tony Martin (Sault Ste. Marie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, obviously the minister does not understand. In large urban areas, we just have to walk down the street or catch a bus to get a passport or an emergency passport.

This weekend, in my constituency, I had a mother and her sick child who had to travel 18 hours to get an emergency passport. This is clearly discriminatory. This is clearly two tier service.

The government has two options: it can either open up more passport offices across the country or it can reverse this policy. Which will it be?

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I said, what the government is trying to do and having to do on so many of these files is fix some of the abysmal mess that we found in our department when we were elected. If the hon. member were to do his job properly, he would have saved his constituent's 18 hour drive, picked up the documents, and delivered them to me.

* * *

ARMS EXPORTS

Hon. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, every year, half a million people, mostly civilians, die of small arms. They are a major health hazard from Darfur to the Congo.

My question is for the Minister of Foreign Affairs. Will he task his officials this summer at the UN world summit on small arms and light weapons to support an international arms trade treaty to ensure that the principles for each state's authorization of small arms exports be added to the UN program of action?

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I agree with the member opposite that this has been in fact a long standing issue. It has been a problem that has cost thousands of lives, if not more. It is an issue upon which we have received a number of submissions, including from the member opposite.

A number of our EU partners have brought resolutions like this before the United Nations. We are certainly prepared to look at them, as all countries are currently doing, and we will be participating in the debate at the UN and making decisions accordingly.

* * *

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Mr. Ron Cannan (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today's Auditor General's report has highlighted first

nations concerns that need to be addressed. The Auditor General has made over 30 recommendations since 2000 on how to improve services for our first nations people.

Despite many promises, the Auditor General's report proves that little was actually done by the Liberal government to improve conditions for aboriginal Canadians.

Can the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development tell us what a Conservative government is doing to address issues facing our aboriginal communities?

Hon. Jim Prentice (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Auditor General's report is in and it is a sad and appalling indictment of 13 years of Liberal government in action. This is what the Auditor General said:

Federal organizations have made unsatisfactory progress in implementing almost half of our recommendations, generally those addressing issues having the greatest impact on the lives of First Nations people and Inuit.

By contrast, in the past 100 days, this government has done more for aboriginal Canadians than the Liberals did in 13 years. We have a national drinking water strategy. The budget includes \$300 million for northern housing, \$300 million for off reserve housing, an additional \$150 million—

The Speaker: That will conclude question period for today.

* * *

● (1505)

PRESENCE IN GALLERY

The Speaker: Order, please. I would like to draw to the attention of hon. members the presence in the gallery of several members of the Nunavut, British Columbia and Yukon governments.

They are: the Honourable Paul Okalik, Premier of Nunavut, Minister of Justice, Minister of Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs, Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, and Minister Responsible for Labour Relations; the Honourable Levinia Brown, Deputy Premier and Minister of Community and Government Services for Nunavut; the Honourable Edward Picco, Minister of Education and Energy and Minister Responsible for Nunavut Arctic College and Homelessness and Immigration; the Honourable David Simailak, Minister of Finance for Nunavut; the Honourable Louis Tapardjuk, Minister of Culture, Language, Elders, Youth and Human Resources for Nunavut; the Honourable Olayuk Akesuk, Minister of Economic Development and Transportation and Minister Responsible for Nunavut Housing Corporation and Mines; the Honourable John van Dongen, Minister of State for Intergovernmental Relations for British Columbia; and the Honourable Jim Kenyon, Minister of Economic Development for Yukon.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

*Business of Supply***POINTS OF ORDER**

ORAL QUESTIONS

Mr. Tony Martin (Sault Ste. Marie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to bring to the notice of the House that the Minister of Foreign Affairs, in his response to my question, has misled the House. In fact, I believe he has misled the people of Canada into believing that a member of Parliament could simply go to a passport office, ask for an emergency passport on behalf of a constituent and expect to get it and bring it back to his constituent. He knows that is not true. I ask him to withdraw that comment and to explain the policy of his ministry in this instance.

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Wascana, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise on the same point of order. I think this is an important issue. I wonder if the minister would take this opportunity to indicate if there is a new process available for passport administration, where, without any requirement for personal appearances at passport offices, members of Parliament may deliver documents on behalf of their constituents in person to the minister for direct processing by the minister where those passports originate from remote locations or in emergency circumstances. If that is in fact a new administrative procedure, it could be very helpful.

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a longstanding practice that members of Parliament can pick up documents and deliver them to passport offices. They can very simply, on behalf of their constituents, process these passport applications. They can bring them to Ottawa on their behalf. It has been a longstanding practice and the member opposite knows full well that this is the case.

The Speaker: I cannot understand how this affects the rules of the House and therefore I do not believe this is a point of order. We have had a sort of mini-debate. I invite hon. members to ask more questions another day, but we cannot prolong question period under the guise of points of order. With all due respect, that is what we are getting.

I will hear from the hon. member for Charlottetown. I believe he is rising on another point.

Hon. Shawn Murphy (Charlottetown, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have a point of order regarding the answer given by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Works and Government Services regarding the alleged contract made between Minto Developments and the Government of Canada. Last week he indicated there was no deal, but now he has indicated that there was a letter of intent.

I have dealt with hundreds of these. This letter of intent, if it is like similar letters of intent, would set out all the terms of the lease agreement, including the time, the lease payments, the covenants and the conditions. The only way any party could get out of the letter of intent would be if there were a violation of a condition precedent.

Very much so, there was an agreement between the Government of Canada and Minto Developments. The hon. parliamentary secretary may not have known that because he is not a privy councillor and he would not be aware of what goes on in Privy Council, and of course, as everyone is aware, the minister is nowhere to be seen in the House. In fact, I do not even know what he looks

like. I am suggesting that the hon. parliamentary secretary may have misled the House.

• (1510)

The Speaker: I am sure the hon. parliamentary secretary will have noted the request of the member for Charlottetown for a tabling of document, but again, I do not believe this is a point of order. It seems to be a matter of debate and interpretation as to what agreement, if any, there was. Whatever the terms of it or anything like that, it is clearly not a matter affecting the rules of the House.

The question really is, do the members agree on what the document constitutes? He can ask for the tabling. I am sure the request has been noted and the parliamentary secretary will respond to that request, I am sure in due course, whether yes or no, of course.

Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to confirm through you to the parliamentary secretary that there was an offer, and certainly in question period last week a clarification for him, about what was understood, both by myself and hopefully by the government. Upon his request, I would be willing to table documents that I have if he is not able to.

The Speaker: I am sure the hon. parliamentary secretary will appreciate the offer of assistance from the hon. member for Ottawa Centre in this regard, but as the hon. member knows, ministers and parliamentary secretaries can table without consent and he might have trouble doing so. As I say, we will wait, and I am sure he can pass his offer along to the parliamentary secretary. I am sure it will be much appreciated. In the meantime, we will go to orders of the day.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

OPPOSITION MOTION—PESTICIDES

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

The Speaker: Before question period, the hon. member for Vancouver Island North had the floor. She has six minutes remaining in the time allotted for her remarks. I therefore invite the hon. member for Vancouver Island North to resume her speech.

Ms. Catherine Bell (Vancouver Island North, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I will remind hon. members that I was talking about pesticide spraying on a small island railway and had just finished speaking about the devastating financial impacts that this would have had on a small family farm if the spraying were to have gone ahead. However, the communities along this small rail line got busy. Letters were written to ministers and town councils. Rallies and forums were held. A lot of work was done on the part of a lot of committed people to put a halt to the spraying, but I fear we have not seen the last of this issue.

Business of Supply

If there were a ban on pesticides, perhaps our fears would be alleviated and the many people who live in communities along the tracks would literally breathe easier. We know that the use of chemicals and fertilizers on lawns is dangerous. In fact, the directions say not to use them where there are pets and small children in the area, but who is more likely to use public parks and school grounds than small children?

Another group in my riding, the Valley Green coalition, led by Gaylene Rehwald and Kelly McLeod, made presentations at many city councils, with their children, to stop the use of chemicals in public areas. They were successful. Many of those communities, including my hometown of Cumberland, B.C., have now drafted pesticide bylaws. It is active groups like this all across this country that are raising awareness about a serious health and environmental issue, and we should listen.

As some of my colleagues have already mentioned, this issue is first and foremost one of public health. Family doctors are beginning to see the real effects of these toxins. Rates of non-Hodgkin's lymphoma and leukemia, nervous system damage, and early puberty are all high in areas that have a high use of pesticides. In fact, the rate of children having these problems in homes that use pesticides is higher than that of those who live right next door.

However, not using pesticides is simply not a solution if others around us continue to. The use of pesticides goes much beyond the concept of consumer choice. As for the argument that if we do not like it, we do not have to use it, it does not make sense in this case. By their nature, pesticides do not stay in one location. They can be carried by the wind or washed into our yards by rain, or they can be tracked into the home by someone simply walking on a lawn that has been treated. As long as one person on the street is using pesticides, the whole neighbourhood is susceptible to this second-hand pesticide exposure.

Just as one neighbour is not safe from another who applies these toxic chemicals on a lawn, communities that have banned the use of pesticides are not safe if a neighbouring community still lets these chemicals be used. Carried through the air and the water by animals and insects, these chemicals affect us all if they are in use. It is that simple. That is why we need a national ban on the use of chemicals for cosmetic purposes.

Again, this issue needs to be looked at as a serious health and environmental concern. Pesticides have been linked to diseases such as cancer, to skeletal abnormalities and neurological and immune system damage, and to reproductive effects such as sperm abnormalities and increased miscarriages.

With the strain on our health care system, we do not need to be adding to already overcrowded hospitals and wait lists with something that could have been prevented. That is what we are talking about here today. It is the old adage that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. If we can prevent one more case of cancer from developing in our children, if we can prevent one more person from suffering the effects of a weakened immune system, if we can prevent one more family member from suffering the heartbreak of abnormal birth, then not only have we saved our health system money, but we have given peace of mind to many families.

Let me close by adding again that this is a serious environmental issue as well as a health issue. As we learn more about the negative effects of something that was supposed to make our yards and gardens more beautiful, we find the exact opposite. Pesticides contaminate indoor air and surfaces anywhere from hours to years after application. They can accumulate in soil and they take years to break down.

Pesticides accumulate in the tissue of amphibians, fish, mammals and birds. This interferes with growth, reproduction and behaviour. It is also linked to the decline of certain species. Pesticides contaminate water and poison the food chain for animals and people.

● (1515)

I ask all hon. members to support this motion, this first step on the way to healthier communities and a healthier environment.

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I follow the debate, it appears there is some merit on both sides. In my experience, though, the motion, as it is worded, is very detailed. I have often found that when there is a list of things included, it must mean that something is left out. My concern is there are circumstances which have not been anticipated by this.

I note that point (d) states, "that should further exemptions be sought to this pesticide ban", and I assume the ban is not an outright ban but rather a ban of use in a particular place, scientific and medical evidence must be given to justify it.

In the last section of the motion, it seems as if there is a shift away from the section banning the storage or use in a premises to a ban of a pesticide outright and that it requires the manufacturer to prove that this pesticide should be used. It sounds like a totally different subject to me. I hope the member can clarify it for the House.

Ms. Catherine Bell: Mr. Speaker, what I have outlined in my remarks is that pesticides are dangerous and ought not to be used in any circumstances.

The motion was designed to be a first step in moving our communities away from using pesticides in public areas and places where animals and children play and live. We know some of the issues around pesticides. They take years to break down. They harm our immune systems, and birth defect issues go along with that. We know they harm people and also the environment.

Again, this is a first step. We cannot anticipate everything. We would like to do that, but we cannot see the future. However, we know from past experience that further continuation of the use of pesticides could have more harm on our environment and children.

Business of Supply

• (1520)

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis (Winnipeg North, NDP): Mr. Speaker, some questions were raised earlier in this debate by a member of the Liberal Party, which seemed to get some support from Conservative members. It was the suggestion that we were terribly irresponsible for daring to use the word cancer in the context of this debate vis-à-vis exposure to pesticides.

The member for Malpeque in fact specifically chastised me and others for daring to link the two. Conservative members seemed to cheer in their seats and support the notion that one should not dare suggest there could be anything so nasty as cancer that could flow from exposure to pesticides.

This is despite the fact that we know from certain studies, going back to the national coalition for alternatives to pesticides, which showed that 159 pesticide related deaths were reported between 1980 and 1985 in the United States. This is despite the fact that there were about 16 million U.S. citizens sensitive to pesticides, according to a 1990 study. Another American study indicated that children of parents who used garden pesticides had a seven times higher risk of developing childhood leukemia.

Is it wrong for us to suggest that there is the possibility of cancer and other serious illnesses caused by exposure to pesticides?

Ms. Catherine Bell: Mr. Speaker, it is outrageous that someone in this place at this time in this decade would think it is not appropriate to mention the word cancer and link it to pesticide use. As she mentioned in her remarks, many studies have been done and have linked cancer to pesticide use. It is not unheard of and it is not an unknown fact.

People in communities across the country are advocating for their local community town councils to ban the use of pesticides on public green spaces and property so their children will not be at risk.

Do not just take my word for it, either. I have a study by the Ontario College of Physicians and Surgeons. It also points to linking pesticide use to brain cancer, prostate cancer, kidney cancer, pancreatic cancer among others and also leukemia.

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, It is a pleasure to rise and speak to the NDP motion put forward by the member for Toronto—Danforth with respect to pesticide use in Canada.

This debate reminds me of some of the previous work I did in Parliament in 2002. I tabled a motion on environmental contaminants, their affect on human health and how they broke down the immune system, caused respiratory diseases and a high rate of cancers. My area of Windsor, Ontario has been subjected to a series of higher health risks related to toxins in the environment. Part of that is from the use of pesticides.

When I put that motion forward, it was supported by the Progressive Conservative Party of the day. An amendment was supported by the Bloc. The amendment was passed in the House with some Alliance support and some Liberal support. When the main motion went to a vote, individuals from the Liberal Party abandoned it and it was subsequently defeated. My motion would have created an action response to help areas like the Sydney tar

ponds and Windsor. Windsor has a high degree of thyroid cancer and other types of illnesses caused by toxins.

The argument was twofold. It was not just in the capacity of the affects on individuals and their sense of well-being. The OECD provided some economic data showing a significant GDP loss of 2% to 6% because of contaminants in our environment. Some of these contaminants are pesticides. There is a direct correlation to our productivity and our ability to compete and be successful in the world because people are sick for no reason.

Today's motion relates to the banning of some pesticides for cosmetic reasons, isolating other issues that are sensitive to farming and water treatment. Banning the use of pesticides for cosmetic reasons has been resoundingly supported across the country by many municipalities. It is important to note that the motion looks at that as a first step, as a precautionary principle. We all know that taking precautions is important.

We talk about our health care system and the amount of money that continually goes into it. We talk about how we can improve things, how we can keep up with the demands, the cost of drugs, the long wait times, the shortage of doctors and nurses. However, we do not address the issues we can control, and one of those issues is wellness. Pesticide use is part of that wellness, and we can deal with that.

This is why I am proud to support the motion. It is important to note that by prevention, we can save money, we can have healthier lifestyles and we can be more productive as a society. For all these reasons, I support the motion. This is a healthy first step forward.

We have heard some arguments about this not being based on science. The reality is many doctors and medical journals support banning pesticides. Organizations such as the Canadian Cancer Society support it. They understand the important precautionary element.

Some of the arguments I have heard today are some of the same arguments I heard about people who smoked. Some said that smoking only affected the individual and not the people around them. We know this to be a fallacy. Society has undergone a significant transformation, not only here in Ontario but across the country and around the world. People have begun to realize that individuals in the immediate vicinity of a smoker suffer health consequences too because they are breathing in second-hand smoke. There were lots of arguments then about this not being based on sound scientific information. We know that is not the case. That is why we have seen a significant change.

Business of Supply

•(1525)

I would be remiss if I did not mention the outstanding work of the member for Winnipeg Centre who tabled private member's legislation, Bill C-225, which is an act to amend the Pest Control Products Act regarding the prohibition of use of chemical pesticides for non-essential purposes. This is where a lot of the essence of this motion comes from. It contains a series of whereas clauses, but it talks about limiting the use of pesticides on our home lawns, in the ornamental care of flowers and different types of plants and vegetation, and at schools and other public buildings where animals and people tend to use the grassy areas. As well it makes sure that issues around weed control are done in a different way. I am proud to say that I come from a municipality that is taking up this challenge.

Not only has the member for Winnipeg Centre tabled Bill C-225, but it is interesting to note that he has championed other causes relating to public safety.

At one time asbestos was considered safe to use, but we now know from the medical evidence that its effect is very toxic and it causes significant problems to individuals. Hence, asbestos has been banned in many regions. As well, there is a limitation and control of its use that we did not have in the past.

The member for Winnipeg Centre also identified trans fats as a public policy issue that needed to be debated. Trans fats were being used far too often in our food rather than alternatives.

It is important to note that in today's NDP motion we are talking about moving toward prevention and alternatives as opposed to the outright practice in the spring of putting pesticides on the weeds. These products are poisons. They are meant to kill living organisms, whether they be insects or plants. They are meant to kill and subsequently they get into our water table and affect us as individuals and collectively as a society.

The member has been a champion in the cause against Zonolite. Zonolite is another problem. Our soldiers who serve us so well have been living in accommodations provided by the government, which contain Zonolite, an insulation product that has human health concerns and causes illness.

Many times when we are looking at a significant change in public policy in the use of different types of substances, there is a push back in society saying that we have to prove outright the causality of everything prior to banning something or at least to mitigate some of the connection. This issue is very difficult to deal with.

The April 2006 issue of the *Journal of Paediatrics and Child Health* has a section on health assessment with regard to pesticides. It assesses human health risks chiefly on the basis of animal toxicity studies and human exposure estimates. Many of these studies are proprietary and not peer reviewed. When pesticides are introduced into our system here in Canada they are not necessarily peer reviewed and they do not have the necessary scrutiny.

The onus should be on the companies that want to introduce the product to ensure the safety well and beyond because we know that the causality is there.

The journal goes on to describe safety factors. It notes that because there are so many pesticides and different toxins and

different types of chemicals in our current system and in our environment, it is hard to isolate the exact culprit. What we do know is that we have a causality on these types of pesticides relating to cancer, skeletal anomalies, immune system damage, neurological damage, reproductive effects. They all have links, which is important to note.

In wrapping up, we need to change, and this is part of the ongoing public policy debate in Canada. There is prolific use of pesticides in our culture. I pay tribute to the municipalities and individuals who have been fighting across this country to make sure that our practices are better. Prevention is the best thing to save us money, to save our health and to be a more progressive society so we can prevent risk for our citizens.

•(1530)

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member's input in the debate is certainly very interesting.

My question for the member has to do with jurisdictional responsibility. Certainly the pesticides act does follow on this, but in the decision in *Spraytech v. Hudson* in 2001, the Supreme Court of Canada found that the town of Hudson, Quebec had the right, given under provincial law, to regulate where pesticides could be used.

I am wondering whether in developing the motion, consideration was given to jurisdictional exemptions, where it has been determined that, for instance, municipalities can deal with pesticide use on one's own personal property for gardening purposes, et cetera. The jurisdictional issue is what I am concerned about. Perhaps the member could explain what consideration was given in that regard in developing this motion.

•(1535)

Mr. Brian Masse: Mr. Speaker, my experience is that the municipality I come from and other municipalities have been requesting leadership from the federal government on this file.

The reality is that at the municipal level, there are individuals of all political stripes who feel they have been put on the spot about this issue. They have had to deal with it at the local level and they believe there should be more leadership from the federal jurisdiction that would actually help to support the case they have advanced which is the banning of pesticides.

It is important to note that jurisdictional issues are very sensitive. My experience to date has been that municipalities are looking for leadership from the federal government on this and other issues with regard to human health.

Ms. Judy Wasylcia-Leis (Winnipeg North, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am glad my colleague from Windsor has been able to put on the record some of the reasons that this motion is so important. He no doubt has heard enough of the debate to know that there are a significant number of Conservatives, if not all of them, and from the looks of it a significant number of Liberals, who are likely going to oppose this motion.

Business of Supply

As we have seen so many times this past month or so, the Conservatives are beginning to look an awful lot like Liberals. They feign concern and compassion and yet when something requires them to put their money where their mouths are and show action, they seem to back off and ignore human health concerns.

My colleague has worked on this file for a number of years, as I have since 2002. Has anything actually changed to suggest that there is no linkage between exposure to pesticides, especially in the concentrated amounts that are used on lawns for cosmetic purposes, and serious health problems, such as cancer, malignant lymphoma and non-Hodgkin's lymphoma and other serious issues at least as the literature identifies it?

Mr. Brian Masse: Mr. Speaker, it is sad to see what is potentially happening here. The government could take a bold step forward. The government has talked. One of the positive things about the budget was a discussion about a cancer strategy, which is interesting because the Canadian Cancer Society supports this motion and ban. It is very important that the government have public policy right now which could enhance and support this position. It is sad to see the government moving away from that.

I come from Windsor and Essex County and we have significant problems with the environment. It makes me ill to think of the things that we could be doing to prevent illness but are not. I mentioned the *Journal of Paediatrics and Child Health*. Children play on lawns and on equipment and often eat food from hand to mouth and ingest these chemicals. They are 10 times more likely to be affected by pesticides. This is something that we can move on and be preventive. I do not understand why the Conservatives are acting like Liberals.

Mr. Steven Fletcher (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to address the motion of the hon. member for Toronto—Danforth.

One thing that struck me when I read this motion was that while the House may want to express an opinion on this, the proposal would likely have the federal government trespassing in areas of provincial jurisdiction. Let me take a moment to provide this insight for the House.

Section 92.13 of the Constitution says that provinces have jurisdiction over property and civil rights within their boundaries. It seems to me that many of the actions anticipated here are covered. Under section 92.8, the provinces have jurisdiction over municipal institutions and some municipalities have chosen to act in this area.

Constitutional issues aside, this motion appears to ignore the efforts that are made in Canada to ensure that the pesticide products legally in use in Canada are those that are safe to use according to the best possible scientific evidence. It also ignores the state of the law on pesticides or pest control products, and it ignores the efforts being made to ensure that risks to human health and to the environment are minimized when those products are used according to directions.

Without question, the regulatory environment in which the Government of Canada in general and the health portfolio in particular are functioning is a challenging one. There is the sheer scope of the enterprise. In all, Health Canada, the Public Health Agency and the Pest Management Regulatory Agency are responsible for 14 regulatory programs, often working in collabora-

tion with partners in the provinces and territories and other stakeholders.

The regulatory responsibilities dealt with in this portfolio touch the lives of Canadians in many ways, including food, drugs, medical devices, natural health products, hazardous materials, consumer products, assisted human reproduction, and of course our topic today, pesticides. In short, the health portfolio and the department and agencies therein engage in a complicated juggling act, but the fact is that they work together to protect and promote the health of Canadians and to offer timely access to safe and effective therapies and products.

In speaking to the motion brought forth today, I want to comment on the Pest Control Products Act, legislation for which the hon. Minister of Health is responsible to Parliament. I also want to describe the work of Health Canada's Pest Management Regulatory Agency, the PMRA, which is the regulatory body overseeing pesticides in this country. In particular, I want to comment on new pesticide legislation that our government looks forward to seeing in force soon.

Let me underline a few key points about pesticides and their regulation in Canada.

The most important point is this. The regulation and overseeing of pesticides by Health Canada under Canadian law is exacting. It is driven by the best and newest scientific evidence available and it is aimed squarely at this goal: to ensure that the only pesticides that are registered or permitted for use in this country are products that pose no unacceptable risks to health or to the environment of Canadians.

There can be risks associated with the use of pesticides. For this reason, pesticides are among the most rigorously tested and regulated substances in the world. What does that mean in practice? It means that any company that wants to introduce a pesticide into the Canadian market has to seek and obtain the approval of Health Canada, and any such company must do so on the basis of scientific evidence that shows that health and environmental risks are within acceptable limits.

Several of my colleagues have already commented on the excellent work and the rigorous processes of Health Canada and the Pest Management Regulatory Agency in detail, but let me say this much. The process of determining whether to register a pesticide for sale and use in Canada is guided by the best science possible.

• (1540)

The analysis of the evidence the PMRA scientists conduct is a careful one. The work of that agency is seen as among the most stringent in the world and work that regulatory partners in other countries treat with respect.

Let me offer one example of how stringent that analysis is. The scientific testing required prior to registration has to address the potential impacts of pesticide on Canadians of all ages, from our youngest to our oldest. There is no one size fits all approach to evaluating products as important as these.

Business of Supply

More than that, the PMRA continually updates its pesticide assessment methods to draw on the latest and best evidence to meet our goal of ensuring the utmost safety for Canadians and Canada's environment. As part of this, the PMRA conducts special reviews or re-evaluations of existing registered products.

Those reviews and re-evaluations enable the PMRA scientists to evaluate new safety issues, bring assessments of old products up to modern safety standards and amend the registration status of a product when the evidence shows that is necessary.

All this is taking place under an act that dates back to 1969. We soon expect to bring into force the new Pest Control Products Act, along with the many regulations and procedures that have had to be consulted on and developed to support the new legislation.

The new act is the result of substantial efforts over many years to reflect the kind of pesticide regulatory system that Canadians expect and deserve, one that earns their confidence.

Let me remind the House about the act. The new Pest Control Products Act does not change the fundamental way in which pesticides are regulated in Canada, which I described a few moments ago. However the new act achieves three goals.

First, it strengthens the health and environmental protection provided under existing law. For example, a number of definitions have been included for important terms, such as "health risk", "environmental risk" and "value". The term "environment" is defined in the same way as it is in the Canadian Environmental Protection Act.

The new act includes an interpretation of the term "acceptable risk". It states that the health and environmental risk of a pest control product are acceptable if there is reasonable certainty that no harm to human health, future generations or the environment will result when the product is used as directed.

Current PMRA risk assessment and risk management practices are consistent with this definition. This enshrines that approach in law. Let me offer the House an example.

A minute or two ago I mentioned that Health Canada evaluates products for their impacts on people of all ages and the new legislation requires that. However it also requires that an additional margin of safety must be applied to protect infants and children from risks posed by pesticide residues in food and when pesticides are used in and around homes and schools.

The second accomplishment of the new act is to make the registration for pesticides more transparent. Canadians want to know about the substances being used in their environment. The new act introduces broad access to information provisions. Essentially, with two exceptions, all information related to a product and its registration will now be publicly available once the law is fully in force. The first exception is confidential test data that is normally scientific information. Now will that be hidden from view? No.

Even that confidential test data will be available for public examination in a reading room after a pesticide is registered. In fact, only confidential business information that meets a very precise and narrow definition, such as financial information, manufacturing

processes and ingredients in a product that are not of health or environmental concern, will remain confidential.

On the other hand, the identity and concentration of ingredients or formulants that are of health or environmental concern will be made available to the public on labels and material safety data sheets and through the public registry.

•(1545)

The openness of the new act is shown in other ways as well. The new act will require public consultation before a major registration decision is made final. As a part of this, Canadians and all interested parties, including other levels of government, will be able to see summaries of the evaluation of pesticide risks and values, along with the proposed decision and rationale.

Under the new act, any member of the public can file a notice of objection to a major registration decision. The new legislation brings a much greater level of accountability than the previous legislation.

The importance of this kind of accountability and transparency transcends the issue of pesticide regulation. Our government takes accountability very seriously and made it one of its highest priorities. Canadians have a desire and the right to see how the health regulatory process works and to know how the government is working for them.

The new act delivers a third achievement, which is to strengthen the control on pesticides after they have been registered. In particular, the new act strengthens the existing provisions for re-evaluations or special reviews of pest control products.

I want to point out one aspect of these new provisions that is relevant to this debate. I know we have heard and will hear about the precautionary principle in connection with the use of pesticides. The new act incorporates that principle.

If there is reason to believe that a registered pesticide is posing a threat of serious or irreversible damage, the Minister of Health can implement cost effective measures to prevent adverse health impacts or environmental degradation. That would be true even if the evidence falls short of full scientific certainty at the time.

Let me mention one more aspect of the new act. It requires the reporting of new information that indicates the health or environmental risks or the value of a registered pesticide may no longer be acceptable. That could be evidence of adverse impacts to human or environmental health. It could be new scientific evidence.

Business of Supply

In all these and other ways, the new legislation raises the bar in terms of accountability and transparency, all grounded in the best science possible.

I want to make an important remark about the new act that I believe is no less important. The new act does not see products such as pesticides as the be all and end all of dealing with pests. In fact, the new act encourages sustainable pest management and will help us improve access to pesticides with even lower risks, to meet the demand that is clearly growing among many Canadians.

It recognizes that wise pesticide use includes room for no pesticide use or the use of alternative methods. Quite simply, it enables people to make choices that are supported by science. The approach that we have in Canada to the regulation of pesticides is known and respected around the world.

Before I end my comments today, I want to make one last point about Canada's international efforts.

Canada participates actively with both NAFTA partners, the U.S. and Mexico, as well as members of the Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development, to ensure that standards for pesticides incorporate the latest scientific knowledge.

Canada works jointly with its U.S. counterpart, the Environmental Protection Agency, to re-evaluate older pesticides to ensure they meet modern standards. The U.S. budget for re-evaluations is \$58 million U.S., while Health Canada currently budgets \$10 million. By using U.S. reviews and leveraging work completed by the U.S., Health Canada's Pest Management Regulatory Agency is able to re-evaluate older pesticides registered in Canada to ensure they meet modern safety standards in as short a time as possible.

I thank the hon. member for Toronto—Danforth for the motion presented today but the system that we have works well. It is a system that is constantly improving and, as new evidence comes to light, we will see a new system blossom under the new act. Above all, it is a system that is driven by firm commitment to act in ways that respect human health and the health of our environment. As we implement the new Pest Control Products Act, Canadians will see the commitment even more clearly.

• (1550)

Ms. Bonnie Brown (Oakville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate my hon. colleague on his speech and on, what I would call, his total acceptance of the new Pest Control Products Act. I realize he was not with us at the time the bill went through the House and the Standing Committee on Health but I was.

It seems to me that the motion by the member for Toronto—Danforth is trying to extend to urban and suburban dwellings and the spaces around them the rules that the bill covers for farmers and rural dwellers.

My colleague might be interested to know that at the time this bill was created it was estimated that 80% of Canadians lived in urban settings and it was interesting that 80% of the witnesses who came to talk to us about the bill were from urban settings. They were literally begging us to ensure that the rules coming into force with this bill would apply in urban settings.

Many of them had been begging their municipal governments to ban the cosmetic use of pesticides and were not getting anywhere. The municipal governments were saying that the province or the federal government should do it and we in turn were saying that it was a matter of local responsibility. It seems to me that we heard from every possible stakeholder and the serious message we heard was mainly from urban people who wanted the bill extended to their environment. It seems to me that the motion by the member for Toronto—Danforth does just that.

I would ask my colleague on the other side whether he feels these rules should be restricted to rural dwellers or whether urban dwellers such as those in Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia might also be entitled to the benefit of them.

• (1555)

Mr. Steven Fletcher: Mr. Speaker, I would like to point out that pesticides are among the most tested substances on the planet. Before a pesticide is approved, it needs to go through at least 200 scientific studies to ensure it will not be harmful to Canadians or the environment.

There always needs to be a balance and certainly the people of Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia would appreciate knowing that the substances they may decide to use are safe. It is Health Canada's job to ensure they are safe. Like many other things, as long as people follow the directions, Health Canada has done due diligence to ensure there is a safety factor with pesticides.

The motion at the table today is not appropriate. However I am pleased with the act because it provides the flexibility to re-evaluate on a case by case basis.

Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the member mentioned the PMRA and the fact that it is in the business of overseeing how pesticides are tested, categorized and, therefore, how they are used. I am wondering if he would like to comment on the fact that, notwithstanding the bill that was passed in 2002, which we heard a bit about before, that it has not been promulgated. Therefore, the idea that citizens actually have access to the information is in fact not true. That is a huge problem and has been a problem for a while. It is a locked box for citizens.

I would like to get his comments on the fact that the Ontario College of Physicians and Surgeons has come out in favour of this reverse onus. In other words, we are not saying to ban it forever. We are saying to stop using them and stop allowing them to be used until the industry can prove they are safe. We want to use reverse onus for the sake of the health of Canadians.

It is interesting that the PMRA has zero doctors on staff to oversee this. The Ontario College of Physicians and Surgeons and the Cancer Society are clear that they are against the use and yet we do not have the resources from the PMRA nor do we have the promulgation of the legislation he is referring to where we would have access to the information. I would like his comments on that.

Mr. Steven Fletcher: Mr. Speaker, the government looks forward to ensuring that the act is brought into full force.

I remind the member that in order to register a new pesticide, more than 200 scientific studies must be conducted to determine if it would cause any negative effects on people, animals, birds, insects, plants, as well as soil and water. These detailed studies must be conducted looking at the potential for a given pesticide to cause adverse health effects, such as cancer, birth defects or any other type of ailment, both in the long term and in the short term.

The member also needs to understand that Health Canada does not work alone during this process. The Health Canada works with other developed countries and other stakeholders, and leverages their research as well to ensure that the safety of Canadians is indeed protected.

I would emphasize that it is really important that people use pesticides as directed. Obviously, if they do not, it could be problematic. The directions must be clear and people must be made aware to follow the directions.

• (1600)

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in the motion the term “banned” is used in several places. In the background notes, the description is “banned for use”. I think it makes a difference. I am not sure whether or not the storage of a pesticide in one of these places would be a contravention of the motion. My question for the member is quite simply, how does he interpret “banned”? Is it banned in terms of use only or is it use and storage or presence within a dwelling?

Mr. Steven Fletcher: Mr. Speaker, I suppose if a substance were banned, then there would be no point in storing it because it would not be used. This is a problem. Again, pesticides do have a role to play. People use pesticides for many good reasons. To ban them could cause a lot of unintended consequences.

It is important that we use evidence based science to ensure that pesticides are used in an effective way that will not deter or reduce the health of Canadians or our environment.

When we refer to pesticides, there are many types of different pesticides. To ban all pesticides, because they happen to be a pesticide, is probably not responsible. There are some pesticides that should not be in use, and Health Canada catches those and those are banned. To lump all pesticides together does a disservice to Canada and Canadians. I think the motion, as the member has alluded to, has a lot of unintended consequences.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): Resuming debate. The hon. member for Surrey North.

Ms. Penny Priddy: Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the previous speaker, if I might, before I begin debate. I am wondering if—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): Order, please. The question and comment period has ended. We are now resuming debate and you have the floor.

Ms. Penny Priddy (Surrey North, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise to support the motion put forward by the member for Toronto—Danforth, and I do so for a variety of reasons.

If we were to go on the Internet and look at pesticides, it would result in many different opinions. Internet sites are not quality-based and some are not credible sites. They may be evidence-based or not.

Business of Supply

One could get the whole gamut from pesticides being no problem, to never use them under any circumstances anywhere in the world. In order to formulate my own views about the use of cosmetic pesticides, I tried to look at sites with some evidence-base to them, sites that were reasonably credible, and medical sites where good research had been done.

I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Ottawa Centre.

I do not know if everybody will remember the *Leave It To Beaver* show. Everybody had a nice white house with a picket fence and the lawn was absolutely perfect. It was green and gorgeous. I can remember my father looking after our front lawn and people knocking on the door and asking how he managed to get his grass looking so nice. I look back now and I am fearful of what was put on it to make it look so nice. The age of these kinds of front lawns is gone.

I am very concerned about the long term effects of pesticides. Pesticides are designed to kill something. They are not designed in particular to do damage to people, but they are designed to be toxic to certain things. We do not know the longevity of the pesticides that are being used. What concerns me the most is the effect of pesticides on children.

The literature really does not support the concept that some pesticides are safer than others. Children have a different kind of take up rate in the pesticide. We do not know whether there is a different latency period. We do know that young children metabolize substances in their bodies differently than adults. If children are exposed when they are three or four years old, we may not see something until they are 14, 15 or 16 years old because we do not have the ability to see that many years down the road. We cannot assure parents that their children will be safe under those circumstances.

Points have been made by previous speakers about the fact that the Canadian Cancer Society does not support the use of cosmetic pesticides and many cities do not support the use of cosmetic pesticides. Nobody is saying there is a direct link to poor health and pesticides, but we have seen many vulnerable groups of people become at risk for a whole variety of cancers such as non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, brain cancer, breast cancer, that can be potentially caused by exposure.

Let me give the House an example, and it is a very sad one in many ways. A number of years ago we noticed that there was a lot of spraying going on in a certain part of Canada that had a large forest industry. We noticed also that the rate of infants and children with neural tube defects like spina bifida was about 10 or 15 times what would have been expected in the normal population. It was way more than what we would see in a “statistical glitch”.

Dads were making a living for their family, putting a roof over their heads, feeding their children, and doing the best they could. They were spraying in the forest. They would come home in their work clothes and expose their families to the pesticides that were all over their clothing. They did not know any better.

Business of Supply

●(1605)

However, what we did know then was that there were a significant number of youngsters being born with spina bifida and other kinds of neural tube defects. So I do not think that we can guarantee people that it will be safe for them in a few years or in five years or whenever that would be.

It is interesting because the company at the time that was doing the spraying described the deaths as simply collateral damage. The company said that one would expect this from any activity that was going on in order to save the trees not taking into account the number of children that were exposed.

A number of other things that are of concern to me are those very vulnerable groups of people in our society. Children, and I do not mean this to sound facetious, are very short and therefore, because they are small, they are exposed to a whole variety of contaminants that an adult is not, because they are closer to the ground.

They do all these things that we think are wonderful. Our babies pick something up and then they put it in their mouths. That is great, except that means they may very well be more at risk if they have dropped it on the grass outside and there have been pesticides used.

We have seen, I think, a combination or a coming together of moms or dads. Moms in particular, who have worked a lot in gardens and nurseries during their pregnancy, have indeed had a higher incidence of children with difficulties, with a number of difficulties, actually, as a result of the fact that mom had been exposed to pesticides during her pregnancy.

I think the same thing happens with the elderly, who have a different kind of immune system. As we age, and nobody in this House is aging, I am sure, our metabolism changes and we process those contaminants and those pesticides differently than a normal healthy adult might, and so we have no way of knowing what that really might mean.

I am little concerned, I must say. The PMRA is supposed to be re-evaluating 405 pesticides that are registered in Canada to see if they meet current standards by 2006, not the new ones but the ones already registered. My understanding is that 1.5% of those have been evaluated and most of those have been taken off the market after they have been evaluated. I am feeling very uncomfortable not only about the new ones to be evaluated but the ones that have already been approved and that are out there being used on a daily basis.

When we look at the urban and rural split or the urban and rural differences between pesticides, the amount of pesticide on an agricultural acre is far less than we see on an urban acre, which I think is the question one of the members asked earlier. We are talking about cosmetic use of pesticides. Although we could certainly, at some stage, have further debate about whether that should be extended. However, that is not the intent at all. This is cosmetic. If being careful, if testing properly, and if waiting until we have better scientific evidence-based information to look at saves the life of one child or one infant, then surely that is worth doing.

●(1610)

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the comments of the member with regard to the health implications as they relate to pesticides and their use.

My question has to do with the mechanics of the motion though. I would refer the member to the final proviso under the exemptions. Under part (d) it states:

that should further exemptions be sought to this pesticide ban, then the onus to prove safety shall be placed on the manufacturer to show to the satisfaction of both the Minister of Health and the House of Commons Standing Committee on Health, through scientific and medical evidence, that an exemption is justified.

Is the member's understanding that if a pesticide is regulated by the Pest Control Products Act, its efficacy for the stated purpose would have been established? It would have either been approved for a specific use and would be safe to do so. It seems there may be a contradiction that the manufacturer somehow has to prove to Health Canada and to the Standing Committee on Health that it is safe when in fact the administration of the Pest Control Products Act has already established whether a product is safe.

The answer may be, and the member may want to comment, that we are talking about the safety in a particular environment as opposed to the safety of the pesticide for use in a specific application.

●(1615)

Ms. Penny Priddy: Mr. Speaker, I suppose it could be that it is for a completely different use than the cosmetic pesticide, at which we are looking. Nevertheless, 465 or 405, whatever it is, have already been approved and are being retested and re-evaluated. The 1.5% that have been done have been pulled off the market because they have not been safe.

I am not sure the manufacturers have been able to prove they are safe. They may have been able to prove it before, but in re-evaluation, with more evidence-based medicine available to us, I am not sure they could prove the same outcome.

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the member's comments about keeping our infants and youth free and clear of coming into contact with pesticides. I am a farmer and I grew up on a farm. I have children on the farm. There is no doubt that there are times when we have pesticides in the yard, when we are spraying equipment, getting ready to go to the fields. However, it is inherent upon me, as the father, to keep my children away from those situations and ensure that we handle the chemicals properly as well as ensure that we handle our clothing properly as the member alluded to earlier. Often someone would walk into the family home with pesticides on their clothing, so we ensure we take the proper precautions to protect our children.

One concern I have with the motion is it is rather lengthy. It has a preamble, then conditions and further conditions tied to it, which virtually make the motion redundant at the end of the day. I believe we are going to present some new regulations this year, with the pesticide act, which will accomplish a lot of the concerns raised in the motion of the NDP.

Business of Supply

I am curious as to whether the NDP is prepared to wait until those regulations come forward to make the decision on whether to go ahead with the intent of the motion. As well, a few comments were made today by some of her colleagues that alluded to the fact that for the moment we were talking about cosmetic use of herbicides and pesticides in residential areas. Is there an underlying reason here that the NDP also intends to go after agriculture and the forestry industry in the use of pesticides and herbicides?

Ms. Penny Priddy: Mr. Speaker, no, I do not think that is the intent at all. I support the member's comments that as a responsible dad, he keeps his children away from pesticides. In a rural area that is what he needs to do because there pesticides are being used for growing purposes and for crops.

However, we are not able as parents to protect our children from rolling around in the soccer field, if they are playing soccer, or rolling around in a playground, or in the backyard or whatever. We cannot protect them from all that without putting them in a bubble. We cannot provide the same kind of protection in an urban area.

It is not the intention of the motion to prevent the member from carrying on his profession.

Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to speak to this issue today. I know it is an issue for many of my constituents. Ottawa tried unsuccessfully to bring in a pesticide. One of the reasons it is important to have it in this place and to have the federal government take ownership of it is that many other municipalities want this kind of law. They look to the federal government for leadership.

In recent years the issue of non-essential use of pesticides on public and private property has become an important issue with residents and municipalities across Canada. This is happening because of the evolving scientific evidence showing a relationship between the use of pesticides and health risks for humans, particularly pregnant women, children and seniors.

Environmental evidence is also showing that pesticides harm species other than those that are targeted, including household pets and wildlife, and that should be acknowledged as well.

Today we are asking our colleagues to support a motion that would place a moratorium on pesticide use for esthetic purposes and would invoke the precautionary principle for future regulations. This would place the onus on the manufacturer of any pesticide that seeks exemption in the future to prove safety to the satisfaction of both the Minister of Health and the House of Commons Standing Committee on Health through scientific and medical evidence.

It is important to note the 2003 Auditor General's report found inadequacies on the part of our Pest Management Regulatory Agency that has been referred to today. The report said:

The federal government is not adequately ensuring that many pesticides used in Canada meet current standards for protecting the health and quality of the environment.

Second:

The Pest Management Regulatory Agency, a branch of Health Canada, has developed a sound framework for evaluating pesticides, but key elements of the evaluation process need to be strengthened (i.e. needs to use up-to-date evaluation methods; ensure that it has adequate information to complete the evaluations).

The Auditor General went on to say:

Health and environmental standards relating to pesticide use have risen, but the progress made in re-evaluating older, widely used pesticides against them has been very slow. All pesticides re-evaluated to date were found to pose significant health or environmental risks, at least for some uses.

The result of these inadequacies is overuse by a population who assume that products they are using are safe because they've been tested.

Nothing could be further from the truth.

It is also noted, as I mentioned before, that there are no Canadian licensed medical doctors on the staff of the PMRA. Currently, the PMRA is re-evaluating, my colleague mentioned, some 405 pesticides that are registered in Canada to determine if they meet current standards. To date, 1.5% have been fully re-evaluated. What are the results of that revaluation? All 100% of the cases of the pesticide has either been removed from the market or have had their permitted uses restricted.

We would like to see a more active precautionary principle put in place that would put a stop to the sale and application of these products until it is shown that they do not pose unacceptable health risks, a very reasonable submission.

The Ontario College of Family Physicians has recommended that people reduce their exposure to pesticides where possible. Through a comprehensive review of pesticide research, it confirmed the link between exposure to pesticides and health risks that include the following: cancer such as prostate, kidney, pancreatic, brain cancers, neurological diseases, leukemia and birth defects.

Vulnerable patient groups for pesticide health effects are pregnant women, as I mentioned. That is a special risk group because we are talking about more than just one person. There was an increased risk of childhood acute lymphocytic leukemia when women used pesticides in the home garden during pregnancy. Children are constantly exposed to low levels of pesticides in their food and the environment with no studies on the long term effects. The college reviewed several studies that found an elevated risk of kidney cancer, brain cancer with parental exposure through agriculture. Some children have overall increased risk of acute leukemia if exposed to pesticides, in utero or during childhood.

● (1620)

Pesticides are designed to kill something. Reducing exposure is probably the best thing to do. Those were the findings of the Ontario College of Family Physicians.

I believe all Canadians deserve the same protection. Over 75 municipalities have adopted pesticide bylaws: Halifax, Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver, as well as the entire province of Quebec. Thirty-five per cent of Canadians presently live in communities that have already moved to restrict the use of pesticides as we are proposing. We need to bring this to a level of protection to 100% of all Canadians. Pesticide manufacturers need to prove that their products are safe before they can be marketed to the Canadian public.

Business of Supply

In my opinion the time for debate has past. It is time for concrete action by the federal government to ban the use of these unnecessary chemicals now. Currently, only Australia, Italy, France, Belgium and the U.S. use more pesticides per capita than Canada. The average urban acre in Canada, and this is important to my friends from rural Canada, receives more pesticides than the average agricultural acre. There may be a myth there of which some are not aware.

Similar to second hand smoke, there is no way of assuring that there will be no unintended effects of pesticide use. Pesticides drift in the air. They seep into the soil and into our waterways. Children are at a greater risk because of their small size, fast metabolism and because they generally play closer to the ground.

The Canadian Cancer Society and our doctors are telling us that even when used as directed, these and the unintended effects within pesticides are risky. We must take this into account.

When we take a look at this, the perfect lawn is still possible, if that is a concern, through alternative methods and integrated pest management solutions. We can all pull dandelions, spread clover and hire lawn care companies. In fact, employment has gone up in areas where they have pesticide laws such as we are proposing. We can use organic landscape solutions. No one would deny the right to a healthy lawn. Homeowners can control inspect pests by using other methods and naturally occurring microscopic worms work wonderful.

The dangers of pesticides must be weighed against the benefits, which in most cases are purely cosmetic. Aggregate scientific evidence and the precautionary principle support the need for a cosmetic ban on pesticides.

• (1625)

Mr. Mike Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we all can be very concerned about the use of pesticides. We all want to ensure that in the future we have a safe environment for our families and our children as well.

I have a couple of concerns and then a question. I tend to concur with my colleague from Selkirk—Interlake with respect to what the ultimate objective of the motion is and where it might go in terms of the thin edge of the wedge.

I also have another concern. The member who spoke previously used words like “I think” when asked about her interpretation of the motion. In anything we introduce in the House, we should know where we want to go with it.

I also have a question on the apparent inconsistency in the clauses which states in paragraph (a)(v):

...customarily used by members of the public as visitors, licensees or in any other authorized capacity for recreation or entertainment, including but not limited to parks and sports grounds.

Then in (c) it says that it does not apply to control or destroy pests that could have caused an infestation. It either is or it is not. If there is infestation in a field, does that mean we can use the chemical or pesticide?

What is the hon. member's interpretation of that.

Mr. Paul Dewar: Mr. Speaker, it is important to know that 35% of Canadians are protected by such a law. This has not been an issue in terms of being concerned about it.

I reference the analogy of black helicopters flying around and conspiracy theories. The member should not worry. We are not into that. We are talking about what is in front of us today, and that is 35% of Canadians enjoy a law like this.

What we have to ensure for public health is that there is no unintended effect. If there is a need to use a pesticide because of an outbreak, those levers are there. It is straight and simple. That kind of provision has been provided in the bylaws of other jurisdictions and municipalities. Therefore, we are conforming to that.

If there is a need because of health concerns of an outbreak, then they would be allowed. That is why it is there.

• (1630)

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, item (c) states that this ban does not apply “to a control product used within an enclosed building...”. I am not sure whether that enclosed building includes a dwelling-house. I assume some would argue that it does, but the motion says this does not apply if the product is used within an enclosed building and is used “as an insect repellent for personal use”.

Does this mean that one can only use a personal insect repellent inside an enclosed building, that one cannot go outside that enclosed building and use the insect repellent?

Mr. Paul Dewar: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the microscopic detail with which my colleagues are examining this. It is important. I think what we are referring to here is that when there is an outbreak, people are able to use products to help them with outbreaks within their own homes. I will simply refer again to the restriction of the cosmetic use of pesticides. Again, I will simply point to where it has been used in other jurisdictions. We are simply mirroring the concerns people might have about other appropriate uses. That is why it is there.

Asking about deciding where and when one applies repellent for insects is spurious, I think. This is about being able to use it effectively when there is a legitimate concern in an indoor setting. That is why this is there, and indeed, as it has been mirrored in Toronto and other jurisdictions where there are laws in place.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): 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 Scarborough—Guildwood, Canada Post; the hon. member for West Nova, Veterans.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Québec has the floor.

Ms. Christiane Gagnon (Québec, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I was afraid I would not be able to give my speech. I thought the time allocated for debates was up. Thus, I am pleased to see that it was just a short interruption.

The motion before us today in Parliament is presented by the member for Toronto—Danforth, the leader of the NDP. It states:

Business of Supply

That, in the opinion of the House, beginning on the 22nd day of April (Earth Day) next:

- a) all pesticides which are regulated pursuant to the Pest Control Products Act be banned (i) within a dwelling-house, (ii) on any parcel of land on which a dwelling-house is situated, (iii) on any place that is within one hundred metres of a parcel of land described in paragraph (ii), (iv) in any school, hospital, office or similar building in which members of the public customarily stay for more than a day or work, or (v) on any private or public land that is customarily used by members of the public as visitors, licensees or in any other authorized capacity for recreation or entertainment, including but not limited to parks and sports grounds;
- b) that this ban not apply to a building used for the husbandry of animals, the cultivation of plants or the storage, processing, packaging or distribution of plants or animals or products made primarily from plants or animals, or in the immediate vicinity of such a building;
- c) that this ban not apply to a control product used within an enclosed building: to purify water intended for the use of humans or animals; to control or destroy a health hazard; to control or destroy pests that have caused an infestation; for commercial agricultural purposes; as a wood preservative; or as an insect repellent for personal use; and
- d) that should further exemptions be sought to this pesticide ban, then the onus to prove safety shall be placed on the manufacturer to show to the satisfaction of both the Minister of Health and the House of Commons Standing Committee on Health, through scientific and medical evidence, that an exemption is justified.

That is the motion introduced today regarding a ban on the use of pesticides in certain places. The Bloc Québécois reminds this government and the other parties that this motion encroaches on the jurisdictions of the provinces. In Quebec, we already have legislation, and Quebec has full jurisdiction over pesticides in regard to the regulation of their sale, use, storage, transportation and elimination. These five areas are under the jurisdiction of the provincial governments, in this case Quebec.

The Government of Quebec is well acquainted with the particular nature of the places in question and is also able to arouse the interest of the public. It has a pesticide management code, which sets stringent standards for their use and sale.

What the NDP is proposing today would infringe on the jurisdictions of the provinces and of Quebec in particular. These are shared jurisdictions. Some responsibilities, we grant, are also delegated to the municipalities.

This motion shows that the NDP would like to see the municipal, provincial and federal levels all merge and would like to see only one government. These bills just ride roughshod over the responsibilities of the provinces. However, they are not going in the right direction. They should put pressure, instead, on the provincial health ministers. If some provinces do not have legislation that meets their concerns, they should put pressure on the provincial governments and municipalities to pass stricter laws. In any case, there should be better control over the management of pesticides and the standards should be stricter, more stringent.

In Quebec, we regulate pesticides and their use. We are aware of the problem. I do not think that this is a matter for the federal government.

● (1635)

The federal government is able to approve a product, but once it is registered, the provinces are in charge of its transportation, storage, and use as well as the regulation of the sale of pesticides. This is not a federal responsibility. The Pest Control Products Act and Regulations govern federal activity.

The federal government is responsible therefore for approving pesticides. To ensure that they are safe, their toxicity must be evaluated according to criteria established by the Food and Drugs Act. That is what the federal government does. Here they want the federal government to control other aspects of these pesticides once it has evaluated and registered them, after ensuring that they are non-toxic and safe for families, children and the public. But that is the extent of the federal government's responsibilities.

As I was saying, by virtue of their jurisdiction over local or private matters, the provinces regulate the sale, use, storage, transportation and elimination of registered pesticides. Municipalities also have certain duties. Depending on what the federal or provincial governments ask of them, they can regulate certain aspects, particularly the use of pesticides on public and private land.

We do notice this real will to merge all the parliaments and create just one. They would like to get the government to form just one unit, that is, the federal government. It would then be free to legislate and manage certain acts, instead of leaving the real responsibilities to those whose jurisdiction it actually is. Responsibility at the federal level is very clear and I would like it to remain there.

Let us make the link with the new Public Health Agency and let us examine the responsibilities of Health Canada. A while ago, some members criticized some products that apparently were approved by Health Canada, some 100 of which were withdrawn from the market. In their opinion, such products are not checked quickly enough. This is indeed one of the responsibilities of Health Canada, but the department remains incapable of assuming it.

We know that a lot of public servants work at Health Canada. The Standing Committee on Health has just studied a bill respecting the Public Health Agency. Two thousand public servants work there and it has taken on other responsibilities that actually fall within provincial jurisdictions. Here we can really see that habit of wanting to invade the provinces' areas of jurisdiction. Still, if they want to invade, they have to be ready, since it is a huge bureaucracy. Often in the decentralization processes, citizens are close to their provincial government and the municipalities whereas the federal government governs something else. That is where the responsibilities get confused.

Since this is a shared jurisdiction, Quebec and the provinces have the power to legislate to prohibit the use of registered pesticides or to add more restrictive conditions on the use of products than those set under the Pest Control Products Act.

Under their exclusive jurisdictions in local and private matters, however, Quebec and the provinces have the power to oversee the classification of pesticides for sale and use, the issue of licences to dealers and distributors, the issue of training certificates, the issue of licences for operators, the issue of permits to use certain pesticides, display and notification standards, and matters of transportation, storage and elimination of pesticides.

It is very clear. We can see that the areas of jurisdiction are very clear when it comes to local and private matters. Why not help Quebec and the provinces more to offer services to the people and be more proactive by putting pressure on certain provinces?

Business of Supply

● (1640)

It is perhaps not the situation in Quebec. Earlier, it was said that some provinces had not managed to better regulate the use of pesticides and that the federal government had to help with this motion by banning certain uses. In my opinion, the intention of the NDP is very clear. It would like the federal government to invade areas of provincial jurisdiction instead of putting pressure in the right places.

Furthermore, Quebec carried out broad consultations. It did its homework. Pesticide management ensued from comprehensive consultations carried out in 1998 by the environment department. These consultations followed in the wake of recommendations by the Groupe de réflexion sur les pesticides en milieu urbain, which had as its initial mandate to identify potential solutions that would allow Quebecers to reduce their dependence given the risks of exposure to pesticides. Once again, it is clear that Quebec has met expectations on regulations on the use of pesticides. It has established a code of pesticide management.

In March 2002, the Groupe de réflexion sur les pesticides en milieu urbain tabled its report on the protection of health and the environment by managing the environment in urban settings. It contained 15 recommendations. Some of the provisions of the code of pesticide management came into effect in April 2003. In 2006, the last part of the code came into effect. It bans not only the sale but also the use of pesticides containing some 20 identified active ingredients found in nearly 200 household pesticides. Here again we see that Quebec clearly does its homework. I do not know where the provinces in Canada stand on this, but we do not support the motion. It is a matter of provincial jurisdiction.

The pesticide management code includes a range of strong measures intended both for private individuals and persons who hold a permit or certificate required under the Regulation respecting permits and certificates for the sale and use of pesticides. This applies to businesses selling pesticides and commercial and private users, including farmers and foresters.

This management code bans the use of the most harmful pesticides on grassy areas in public, para-public and municipal green spaces. That is why the Bloc Québécois cannot support this motion. Without naming all of them, I would like to point out that the Government of Quebec bans 17 products in this pesticide management code. Several of its most important recommendations and elements are included in the NDP motion.

I will give examples of places where the use of pesticides is banned. In day cares, early childhood learning centres, pre-schools and primary and secondary schools, only a biopesticide or a specifically designated pesticide can be applied inside or outside. As hon. members can see, we are quite vigilant. That is not to say that we do not take the issue of pesticide use seriously. However, Quebec has the necessary framework for using pesticides wisely. The code also bans the use of these biopesticide products or specifically designated pesticides during care, teaching or activity periods that take place inside or outside the establishment.

Earlier an hon. member from the NDP said she was quite worried because in rural areas children are kept away when farmers use

pesticides, but in urban areas children are left to their own devices and can roll around on the grass, which could be harmful to their health.

In Quebec, the framework for certain bans on the use of pesticides was well evaluated. Personally, I find this management code reassuring. We should ensure that such a code applies in all the provinces. The provinces and the municipalities are better positioned to consider this framework.

● (1645)

In fact, these standards meet Quebecers' expectations, and Quebec controls them much more easily than the federal government could. The pesticides management code already sets very strict standards.

This regulation is one of the most innovative in North America. The Government of Quebec states that the environmental management approach that this framework advocates would limit the non-essential use of pesticides to the bare essentials in matters of lawn maintenance, with public, semi-public and municipal property as well as day care centres particularly in mind, as I said earlier.

We must not lose sight of the main objective of regulation in Quebec and the provinces. Although pesticides are useful, they can seriously affect people's health. We are aware of this. People are increasingly concerned about the harmful effects that pesticides of all kinds have on health. That is why the Government of Quebec developed a framework and a management method. It knows that children and other people who come in contact with pesticides are vulnerable. Some products are extremely dangerous. Health Canada should check some products much more quickly and, in some cases, even determine whether registration is always desirable and safe. This is where the federal government has a role to play, not in prohibiting pesticides.

According to the Coalition pour les alternatives aux pesticides, the damage caused by pesticides must not be overlooked. The Bloc is well aware of this. Toxicologists who used to say that pesticides were not very dangerous are now changing their tune.

This is why we should ensure that Health Canada has all of the necessary resources to run the approval process and to re-evaluate certain products to determine whether they should still be approved for use. This is where federal responsibility lies and where it should provide some structure. Why is the government so slow to review certain products? Are there too few government workers? I think that we are going about this the wrong way by considering a motion that would increase federal responsibility even more.

The new government promised not to interfere in provincial areas of jurisdiction, not to add to a bureaucracy that is often costly and that makes it difficult to ensure the efficiency of every program and every federal action for the entire population.

Business of Supply

This is why we have federal and provincial jurisdictions. We must respect them. The federal government has a lot of responsibilities, including the effects of tobacco use and the Tobacco Act. This week, members of the Non-Smokers' Rights Association came to tell me about their concerns and about how Health Canada has been slow to regulate tobacco use for mild or light cigarettes. Once again, we do not know whether the federal government will act quickly to show the population that these types of cigarette are very harmful to their health. Some countries adopted anti-tobacco legislation after us, and they have already brought in regulations governing mild and light cigarettes.

I believe that Parliament has a lot on its plate and that we should not add much more. It is even behind on many issues, including keeping its promises and developing bills and certain regulations.

• (1650)

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I listened with considerable interest to the presentation by the hon. member for Québec. However, I was also saddened by her presentation. While she spoke of the whole constitutional aspect of this debate, she did not speak of the impact of these pesticides on the lives of Quebeckers. Basically, this is the problem at the moment. Quebeckers are as affected by the rise in the incidence of cancer in this country as are the rest of Canadians.

Organizations in Quebec are calling for something to be done to fight this cancer epidemic. Municipalities in Quebec, such as Hudson and Montreal, have taken this matter very seriously. People in Quebec are calling for the same thing as people living elsewhere in Canada. There is a problem, and Quebeckers are looking for answers. This was seen recently with the rise of the NDP in Quebec and also, of course, with the Québec solidaire party. People are calling for solutions to the problems.

I am saddened by the Bloc Québécois' cavalier dismissal of a question as important as this one for Quebeckers.

In this regard, here is my question for the hon. member. As so many Quebeckers are calling for something to be done and action to be taken to reduce the incidence of cancer, which is ravaging the country, why is the Bloc rejecting the solution being proposed today by the NDP?

Ms. Christiane Gagnon: Mr. Speaker, it is true that I spoke about respecting jurisdictions. The motion before us today would amount to saying that we agree to let the federal government interfere in the provinces' jurisdictions.

The hon. member says that I was not very sensitive with regard to the development of certain cancers that are allegedly linked to pesticide use.

Why, then, in Quebec did a think tank on pesticides in urban communities issue a whole report in 2002? I did not mention every aspect of this report. In the space of a page and a half, it recommends banning 17 products. We have to do our homework.

Certainly people are concerned. I too am concerned. But I think that the provincial governments must be allowed to act. It is up to them to decide what type of framework they want to have.

I am a bit surprised at the member's speech. He says that people are concerned and he asks the federal government to act. In my opinion, we could tell the people that the federal government will spend so many million dollars and that Health Canada or the new public health agency will need so many thousand employees, but we still will not know whether the programs will be effective or not.

Is that what people want? In my opinion, if we gave the various provinces more tools, financially speaking, perhaps they could move forward with more far-reaching programs.

The hon. member claims that we are not sensitive enough and that he is saddened by that. I hope he will get over it. I do not believe I was lacking sensitivity when it comes to the use of pesticides. I am just saying that today's motion does not respect the various provincial and municipal jurisdictions.

The use of pesticides in homes is already banned in Quebec. A management code has been implemented. We should invite the provinces to move forward instead. We need to raise awareness in the provinces where they think there are no far-reaching actions or concrete enough actions to fight pesticide use. Pesticides are very hazardous to health, I agree. An awareness campaign on pesticide use can be carried out in all the provinces. Over the past few years, the public has become more aware of the dangers of pesticide use.

I would like to come back to the products that have been approved and those that would have come off the market.

Does the hon. member not think this is what we should be talking about? What types of products are approved? Perhaps these products were approved a number of years ago. Are these products still compliant? In my opinion, the federal government should be focusing much more on that aspect of the issue rather than managing the use of pesticides. After that there could be awareness programs and then the government could see whether all Canadians were respecting the federal standard. In my opinion, we are going at this from the wrong angle.

I am sorry to have saddened the hon. member, but I think I have helped him save money. I invite him to tell the provinces he thinks are reluctant and have not done their homework with the public, and the municipalities, to intervene as soon as possible because it is their responsibility.

• (1655)

Mr. Robert Carrier (Alfred-Pellan, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I want to commend the hon. member for Québec on her presentation. She expressed the opinion of the majority of Quebeckers on the topic the NDP is putting forward today.

Quebec, through its health department, has already legislated the use of pesticides. I have a grassy area in front of my house and I have not used pesticides on it in at least two years. Since the regulation came into effect I have been using organic fertilizer. This is well respected in Quebec. I am certain that in the other provinces of Canada, the provincial health departments are addressing this. We are very much concerned by this issue.

Business of Supply

The only problem is that we are opening up an additional discussion on the federal level. It is as though we wanted to supplant provincial activities that appear to be ineffective in matters of regulation. By doing this, the responsibilities are overlapped. We end up with tax levels that everyone in Canada finds overwhelming since we have municipal, provincial and, on top of it all, federal regulations.

I want to know whether my colleague agrees with what I am saying. This explains why the House uses a full day of session for a subject that is a matter of provincial jurisdiction.

Is it because there is a lack of imagination or a lack of subjects that concern the federal government that we could discuss in this House? We could talk about the workers assistance program or programs for improving employment insurance. That would be of greater relevant to the federal government. I will leave it up to my colleague from Québec to answer this question.

• (1700)

Ms. Christiane Gagnon: Mr. Speaker, I realize how sensitive the NDP is to the use of pesticides. However, I believe that it is barking up the wrong tree by putting forward a motion that would encroach upon areas of provincial jurisdiction.

I agree with my colleague. Many municipalities have laws that ban the use of pesticides. In my opinion, recalcitrant municipalities should be urged to follow suit. I look at municipalities in the Quebec City area and elsewhere in Quebec. They did their homework and took an approach that was much more socially responsible in order to raise awareness about the potential effects of certain pesticides.

[*English*]

Mr. Rob Merrifield (Yellowhead, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to inform you that I will be sharing my time with the very talented member for St. Catharines.

The subject of this motion is very close to my first-hand experience. I actually have had the privilege to farm all my life. I had first-hand experience with chemicals. I have used them on a continuous basis as far back as I can remember.

I also have to say that I am no fan of pesticides and chemicals. I do not know a farmer who really is, but I do know that they are essential for us when the agriculture community has a problem and when individuals have problems with pests of some sort. Whether it is weeds and they use a herbicide, or a pest as far as some sort of infestation of a crop goes, it must be dealt with in some way.

We have to consider this motion in light of the products being used that have a considerable advantage for the agriculture community and for domestic use within Canada in the sense of dealing with a problem, but I do not know anyone who really likes the chemicals. Farmers do not use them because they like to use them. They use them because they have to use them. They are also very expensive to use. They are not cheap and not very nice to deal with, but farmers do it because they have to deal with a problem.

This motion that we are debating in the House today is an interesting motion. I believe it is fraught with ideology. I look at the very first line and I think that really says where the NDP is going or wants to go with herbicides and pesticides in Canada. The NDP, says

the motion, would like to ban all those pesticides that are regulated under the regulations we have in the country today. That is the NDP ideology. We all understand that and we all know where that party is coming from on it.

The motion has parts (a), (b), (c) and (d). It is really interesting when we get to (d), which states that if the Minister of Health and the House of Commons Standing Committee on Health can be satisfied, Canadians can be exempted from those chemicals or can use those chemicals if they can prove they are safe products. I am privileged to chair the health committee and many members here sit on that committee.

What the NDP is really suggesting, then, is that all the products registered in Canada today are not safe, even if used according to the label. I think that is a false statement. I believe it is something that the NDP cannot validate with any kind of facts or scientific proof. It is because of this that the NDP is trapped in the ideology that all herbicides are bad and should be banned for use in Canada regardless of where they are used. What the NDP motion is really saying is that pesticides should be banned in every dwelling-house, in every home, whether it is in a rural community or an urban setting.

I, for one, would like to suggest that we would be much wiser to discern whether these products have a health risk or not. If the product does not have a health risk, and if we can label them properly, identify them properly and use them appropriately, I suggest that they are safe and appropriate to be used in Canada.

When we are trapped in ideology, though, it usually leads us into all kinds of ridiculous statements and positions. If we were to take an ideological perspective on this, we could say that we should get rid of all table salt because a person could use an extreme amount of table salt, which could be very damaging and could kill individuals. We can say the same thing about sugar and all sorts of products.

Let us take another example. Let us talk about pharmaceuticals. The NDP members are wonderful advocates of pharmaceuticals for this country. In fact, the NDP would like to see every man, woman and child in Canada have all pharmaceuticals paid for by the state. The NDP has been very open and clear about that.

Nonetheless, we have study after study showing that pharmaceuticals are killing hundreds of thousands of individuals in Canada. In fact, the number is 24,000 people per year, according to the Baker-Norton study, who die inside hospitals due to adverse events. That does not count the other ones who may be dying and probably are, and we all know they are because of the extreme amounts of pharmaceuticals that are used in seniors' homes and inappropriately used by ordinary Canadians. I am not against pharmaceuticals even though they are a tremendous hazard if inappropriately used by the population of Canada.

• (1705)

It is when we get trapped by ideology that I find the debate in the House is sometimes very shallow and hollow. We cannot really talk logically and convince anyone that this is an inappropriate motion if the ideology is that all pesticides are to be banned in a country. If that is the premise of the motion, then let us just have a vote on it, because I do not think any debate here is going to change anyone's mind.

Business of Supply

In this situation, we cannot talk about some of the facts before us and deal with them appropriately, but let us look at some of the facts, because I think we have to make sure Canadians understand that a lot of the pesticides that are approved in Canada have gone through rigorous testing and examination and have actually stood the test of time with the science we had at the time they were being approved for use in Canada.

At the time, I think there were 550 active ingredients found in 77,000 different products registered in Canada under the Pest Control Products Act. As for the Pest Control Products Act, 141 active ingredients were registered before 1995. I had the privilege of sitting on the health committee when the committee examined this back in 2001 or 2002. The commitment was made that we were to review these products so that we would bring them up to speed to make sure products were not being allowed onto the market that should not be. That was a commitment made by Health Canada.

I believed that it was very appropriate for us to do that because it had been a considerable time, and I believe it was back in the 1960s, since some of these products had been reviewed. They were on the market at that time and science had improved. We had, and I believe have, the opportunity to convince scientists, researchers and ordinary Canadians that these products are safe, and if they are not safe, we have the opportunity to remove them in an appropriate way so they can be used for the benefit of all Canadians where they need to be used. the benefit of all Canadians.

Let us look at the rigorous testing and re-evaluations. We find at least three things. The first is that when Health Canada announced the undertaking of the re-evaluation, it requested the submission of all available science and information, not only from here in Canada but internationally, from countries such as the United States, Australia or any of the OECD nations. That was so we would be working not only with our own experience but with international experience on some of these products. I think it is a wise thing for us to do, because if herbicides are dangerous to people from Europe, the United States or Australia, they are dangerous for Canadians too. We are no different. The hazards are the same. I think this was a wise thing for the CPCPA to be doing.

The second thing is that it was saying there should be public comment, that the people of Canada should be asked exactly what they were seeing and experiencing with regard to some of these active ingredients. Let us make sure for these pesticides, it said, that any adverse events are reported and dealt with appropriately and, if anything is unsafe, that it be phased out in an appropriate way. All of those things are good, because science has improved in every area of life and the science of being able to evaluate and re-evaluate these products is no different.

Since the re-evaluation has taken place, 53% of the active ingredients on the shelves today have been dealt with, and for 80 of those the manufacturers themselves chose to not produce them any more. Part of it is because the science has improved so much. When we examined this in committee we found that some of the new products that are available because of the new science were not being allowed in as fast as we would have liked. We wanted that because they were so much safer.

● (1710)

We wanted to encourage them to proceed a little faster on that side of it, but in the re-evaluations, 80 of those have been taken off, 9 of them have been decided to be phased out, 77 were accepted with some modifications and 4 were to be left alone with no change.

We can see what has actually happened with the re-evaluation. We must realize that it takes four to seven years before a product can be allowed onto the shelves in Canada and be used for commercial or domestic use. I am a strong advocate—

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I tried to get the hon. member's attention to let him know that his time was winding down but he did not look at the Chair. Your time is up and we will have to proceed to questions and comments.

The hon. member for Burnaby—New Westminster.

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I listened with a great deal of interest to the hon. member's presentation but it seems to come down to this. When he says "we" I guess he means either a Conservative or Liberal administration, but when he says that we have not done anything about other epidemics that exist in the country, and he mentions the 24,000 deaths a year because of pharmaceutical products in Canadian hospitals, he seems to be saying that since we have not done anything about that we do not need to do anything about pesticides. That, to me, is absolutely convoluted logic.

We have the power in this House to put forward measures that will make a difference in the lives of Canadians and will cut the epidemic of cancer that is growing among all age groups because we were given that responsibility through the voters? It is not a question of saying that we have not done anything about these other issues so why tackle pesticides. That is a philosophy of irresponsibility.

We have the responsibility as members of Parliament to take action in areas. We know that pesticides have contributed to the epidemic of cancers. Since we know that people die as a result, we have the responsibility to take actions that are responsible and take actions that lead to nipping in the bud an epidemic that is killing Canadians.

Why would the member oppose a measure that would help Canadians and help save Canadian lives?

Mr. Rob Merrifield: Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague's question is about being trapped in ideology that I believe the NDP members are into. When it comes to pharmaceuticals we know that pharmaceuticals need to be used. A lot of work has been done on that. A patient safety institute has been struck. We have a medical records file, hopefully following the patient much more quickly. We are a little nervous about how slow that is happening but we are determined to ensure it happens. I believe it will be a catalyst on the pharmaceutical side to deal with. I therefore do not think it is accurate to say that nothing is being done.

Business of Supply

It is important to understand that the regulations under pesticides in Canada are seen as being safe. We have the healthiest food products in all the world. We should be very proud of that as Canadians. We have very strong regulations on these products and if they are used according to the label they are perfectly safe, albeit in my experience with these products I do not like using them but I do use them, as do all Canadians. The only reason most of us use them from time to time is because we have a problem that needs to be dealt with.

They are very expensive and difficult to use but to say that pesticides are causing all the cancers in Canada is totally false. There is no science to say that is where it is coming from. I could say the same thing about the lack of bran in our diets or the inappropriate use of cigarettes or other products that are causing much more cancers than we are seeing in pesticides if we look at the numbers.

In saying that, I am not a fan of pesticides but this is an inappropriate way to deal with it. I believe a much wiser way would be to ensure the science is accurate, that Canadians are safe and that the re-evaluations are done appropriately. That is the way we need to go, not this motion.

• (1715)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Richard Nadeau (Gatineau, BQ): Mr. Speaker, during today's debate, the Bloc Québécois showed that there are structural shortcomings. We are in a federal institution, and we are talking about municipal jurisdictions, provincial jurisdictions, provincial-federal ones, or just federal ones.

Nevertheless, my question for the member for Yellowhead is as follows: How can he say to a person dying of a pesticide-related cancer that this is just an ideological issue?

We must go beyond that and not blame the person. I am sure the member's approach is informed by an ideology he agrees with. Yet how can he say such a thing when a person is diagnosed with a pesticide-related cancer? I would hope that goes beyond ideology.

I would like to hear his comments on this.

[*English*]

Mr. Rob Merrifield: Mr. Speaker, maybe I did not make myself clear enough when I said that it was not the ideology. The ideology of the NDP motion is that all pesticides should be banned. If an individual is dying because of the inappropriate use of pesticides or pesticides within their body, that is regrettable.

I make no mistake in my approach. I do not like pesticides. However, if we are speaking ideologically, then obviously the NDP would be supporting genetically modified foods because genetically modified foods are much safer and have much less herbicides than do conventionally grown products. If the NDP were not trapped in an ideology it would see that as absolutely not acceptable.

I talked about being trapped in an ideology of not seeing things clearly and not having a rational debate on the issue.

Mr. Rick Dykstra (St. Catharines, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Yellowhead for giving up some of his time for me and to compliment him on the excellent job he is doing as chair of the health committee.

I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak about the urban use of pesticides, sometimes referred to as the cosmetic use of pesticides. While I may not know a lot about cosmetics, I do have a few things to say about pesticides.

Pesticides are among the most rigorously tested and regulated substances in the world. In Canada, pesticides are regulated under the Pest Control Products Act. A pesticide itself must be approved or registered by Health Canada's Pest Management Regulatory Agency before it is allowed to be sold or used in Canada.

Before a new pesticide is registered, more than 200 scientific studies must be conducted to determine if it could or will cause any negative effects on plants, people, animals, birds or insects, as well as on soil and water. For a product to be registered, the health risks, the environmental risks and the value of the product must all have been tested and approved. Pesticides are also re-evaluated after they have been on the market for some time in order to determine whether they meet current health and environmental standards.

Children continue to be one of the significant concerns when it comes to pesticide use. Health Canada considers the special exposure of children in their assessments each and every time. Children's differences in diet, food consumption, development, metabolism and behaviour are all factored into the risk assessment. Health Canada is also responsible for the assessment of the environmental impact of pesticides and considers detailed information on the fate of pesticides in the environment. Let us be clear. The assessment of the acceptability of risk is based on the most sensitive species tested.

Health Canada also reviews efficacy in order to determine the lowest effective rate, as well as whether the product works for the intended use. These reviews are important to ensure that exposure to pesticides is minimal.

Health Canada carries out the extensive reviews that I have described for all pesticides, whether they are used in urban areas, on farms or even in forests.

I will now turn to a couple of other uses for pesticides but to do so it will require a short discourse on our constitutional powers.

The federal Parliament's authority in regulating pesticides rests primarily on criminal law. This power can be used where pest control products may pose a risk of serious harm, namely, health, safety or the environment. An outright ban on the cosmetic uses of pesticides would presuppose that they all cause unacceptable risks, and this is simply not the case. Once it is determined scientifically that a pesticide can be used safely, which means its use would not pose unacceptable risks to public health or the environment, the criminal law would not support a refusal to register the product.

Business of Supply

Legislative authority regarding the regulation of pest management at the provincial and territorial levels is based on the authority to enact legislation with respect to property and civil rights in matters of local concern. A system of provincial-territorial legislation focuses on the sale, the transportation, the storage and the use of registered pesticides.

This is important because it takes into account provincial and territorial conditions and concerns.

Provinces and municipalities, in some cases, do have the authority to make decisions to further restrict or prohibit pesticide use to reflect the conditions in their own jurisdiction. Some municipalities have passed bylaws to restrict pesticide use on municipal and private lands in accordance with local situations and local needs. My own riding of St. Catharines has exercised that authority on a couple of occasions.

The federal government does not have the authority to intervene on the matter. The federal, provincial and territorial governments have, for many years, recognized that effective pesticide regulation depends on cooperation.

• (1720)

The federal, provincial and territorial committee on pest management and pesticides brings together all of those jurisdictions to exchange information and expertise in order to provide advice and direction to governments on programs, policies and issues relating to pesticides. Regulators at all levels work toward the common goal, which is to help protect Canadians from risks posed by pesticides and ensure that pest control products do what they claim to do.

The new federal Pest Control Products Act which was given royal assent in December 2002 did give further strength to the regulation of pesticides. In fact, the new act was carefully designed to not change the balance of federal, provincial and territorial powers in regard to pest management regulation.

Since 2001 the two levels of government have been addressing public concerns about lawn care pesticides by implementing an action plan on urban use pesticides. This plan is comprised of three key elements.

The first is federal, provincial and territorial cooperation in implementing a healthy lawn strategy which helps Canadians reduce their reliance on lawn pesticides. Second, Health Canada is encouraging pesticide manufacturers to develop reduced risk products and for Health Canada to continue to register reduced risk pesticides as quickly as possible. Third, Health Canada is re-evaluating the major pesticides used for lawn care against the stringent new standards that have been adopted both in Canada and in the United States.

I sure hope to have a healthy lawn this year. I have been trying for a long time and I think this is the year. The healthy lawn strategy consists of seven components.

First is the ability to assess which types of products should be available to homeowners. This has been completed.

Second is the narrowing of the existing domestic category for pesticides and establishing a new category for products that require more controlled domestic use.

Third is improving product labelling so that the use of lawn care pest control products is compatible with enhanced risk reduction practices. This is also underway.

Fourth is developing training materials and programs to educate homeowners on healthy lawn practices which minimize the need for pesticides. This material has also been developed and it has been distributed widely.

Fifth is developing training materials and programs for vendors of domestic products. This is an ongoing activity in conjunction with the provinces.

Sixth is enhancing the training of lawn care and landscape service providers and green space managers. This has also been completed.

Seventh is establishing a healthy lawns web site. This has also been completed.

I am pleased to report that at the end of fiscal year 2005-06 more than 70% of the reduced risk pesticides registered or pending registration in the United States were also registered right here in Canada.

I would like to report on the re-evaluation of older pesticides. On September 27, 2000 Health Canada announced the priority re-evaluation of the eight most commonly available pesticides. This re-evaluation uses modern scientific standards to determine whether any restrictions need to be made to the conditions of registration of these chemicals.

The re-evaluations are complete for four of the lawn pesticides. Lawn use for all four has been phased out. Re-evaluations and reviews for two of the remaining three herbicides, including 2,4-D, have been published and the third is in publication.

Some work remains to be completed, as I noted. Health Canada will continue the re-evaluation process on priority lawn care pesticides and will continue to encourage registrants to submit more reduced risk pesticides for registration. Other areas of activity are the improvement of pesticide labels, revision of information materials, and additional new material suggested by provincial and territorial partners that are right on the web site.

I am pleased to have had the opportunity to describe the actions that this government is taking with respect to pesticides used in the urban environment.

• (1725)

Ms. Jean Crowder (Nanaimo—Cowichan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it was with interest that I listened to the member talk about the work that is being done by Health Canada. I wonder if the member would comment on the Auditor General's report from 2003 which cited serious weaknesses in Health Canada's management of pesticides. The report highlights that new pesticides are sometimes not fully evaluated and older pesticides are not re-evaluated. Information on compliance is lacking and information on the use and impact of pesticides is inadequate.

Business of Supply

In addition, in the 2004-05 budget, Health Canada received approximately \$40 million from industry in terms of supporting its operating budget.

I wonder if the member could comment on why it is that we would have faith in a process that clearly the Auditor General has said is inadequate.

Mr. Rick Dykstra: Mr. Speaker, certainly when the Auditor General speaks, as she did again today, we all need to listen. It is interesting to note that this government is certainly going to act on the recommendations that were made by the Auditor General with respect to the gun registry.

Further to the member's point, I have enjoyed the time that I have served on the health committee. Our chair recently asked all of the health committee members what priorities they wanted to put forward to study on the health committee over the next number of weeks. Interestingly enough, pesticide use was not even put forward by the member for Surrey North who serves on the health committee for the NDP. The member never put forward that pesticides were an important issue that needed to be discussed at the health committee.

It was not important there, and I suggest that it may not be as important as the opposition motion seems to suggest.

• (1730)

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal (Newton—North Delta, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for showing his faith in the regulatory process for pest control. I wonder if he could give us the list of stakeholders that the government has consulted to strengthen the process.

Mr. Rick Dykstra: Mr. Speaker, this is a motion put forward by one of the opposition parties so the question may be better asked of the folks who introduced this motion as to whom they may have or may not have consulted with in respect of the proposal that has been put forward today.

Ms. Bonnie Brown: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

Earlier today a motion was adopted by the House relating to the debate on Afghanistan to be held tomorrow. This motion prescribes that once the debate has commenced, no amendments will be considered. One could call it a take it or leave it motion. I have some serious concerns in this regard, particularly when there are matters of life and death.

Therefore, I wish to move an amendment at this time, the effect of which is to require that at the conclusion of tomorrow's debate, the whole matter be referred to a special committee of foreign affairs and defence for public hearings and a report to this House on its findings and recommendations by October 15, 2006.

The Deputy Speaker: The House has heard the hon. member's request. Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

Ms. Jean Crowder (Nanaimo—Cowichan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Burnaby—New Westminster.

Of course, I am rising in support of this motion. In the debate today we have heard differences of opinion, but I also think there is increasing support for banning the use of cosmetic pesticides. A number of cities across Canada have taken that very step.

I want to refer to various pieces of evidence in support of banning the cosmetic use of pesticides. I want to refer to some work that was done in this very House.

Back in May 2000 there was a report called "Pesticides, Making the Right Choice for the Protection of Health and the Environment". In the chair's preface to this report there were a couple of key comments that speak in support of examining the impact of pesticides on human health:

We looked at the current system of regulating pesticides in Canada and we asked ourselves whether it is possible for one agency, the Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA), to perform two virtually conflicting tasks, namely that of approving chemical pesticides as requested by industry while at the same time regulating them in order to protect health. We asked ourselves whether it is possible to strike a balance between economic and health protection goals.

The chair went on to say:

We found, however, that pesticides are highly poisonous substances designed to kill living organisms and are thus potentially harmful to workers using them and... communities unknowingly exposed as well as to consumers. Therefore, we asked ourselves whether a regulatory system could be designed that would give clear and absolute precedence to human health.

That raised some pretty serious issues about whether or not pesticides were being appropriately regulated and whether or not human health was being protected. There is another report from a committee. A report from the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development stated:

The Committee firmly believes that a moratorium on pesticide use for esthetic purposes is necessary until science has proven that the pesticides involved do not constitute a health threat...in urban areas. Pesticide use should only be permitted in an emergency, such as a serious pest infestation which threatens the health of people and the environment.

Those were two pieces of work that were done right here in the House questioning the safety of the cosmetic use of pesticides and being concerned about the potential impact on human health.

Since we are talking about human health, I want to turn to the *Journal of Paediatrics and Child Health*, Volume 11, Number 4, April 2006. Earlier we heard some members speaking about scientific evidence and talking about proof. The *Journal of Paediatrics and Child Health* report talks about this scientific proof. I want to quote from this journal because these people are specialists in their area. They see the impacts of pesticide use. Many of them are scientists. They look at the weight of evidence. In this particular case, they are talking about the scientific evidence:

The method for obtaining the highest quality of medical evidence, the randomized control trial, is unethical for pesticide testing. However, serious inadequacies in evidence stem from study and review procedures. Pesticide assessment falls short of current best practices by relying on industry-supplied proprietary studies that are not open to independent review and on reviews by interested parties rather than independent systematic reviews of primary literature.

Physicians are questioning whether or not the evidence that is being used to determine pesticide safety is actually adequate. That should lead us to some very serious concerns about the cosmetic use of pesticides in our country, pesticides that impact on human health, on children's health. This is a very important question for the House to consider.

Business of Supply

I will now talk about municipalities, because we have heard about jurisdictional issues. The Federation of Canadian Municipalities has talked about the fact that communities across the country are increasingly aware of the potential impact of synthetic pesticides on the health of children, pets and wildlife.

● (1735)

Research findings are linking pesticide toxicity to reproductive disorders, neurological conditions, cancers, and other medical conditions with particular concern about the effects of pesticide exposure on pregnant women and young children. They go on to talk about the variety of tools that are being provided, both through the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and other organizations to help Canadians break their dependence on cosmetic pesticides.

Even a body like the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, that can hardly be called a left wing think tank, is calling on Canadians to re-examine their pesticide use and is offering support to municipalities in that vein.

I will now switch to some more progressive thinkers and I am going to talk about David Suzuki and some other organizations. I think David Suzuki has a great deal of credibility among Canadians. He talks about pesticides and this can be found on the David Suzuki Foundation website. He states:

Pesticides are equal-opportunity killers. While they may eliminate garden pests, they also kill beneficial soil bacteria, insects, and even wildlife. Killing off these "good" bacteria, worms, and bugs unfortunately leads to a catch-22 situation since gardeners then have to add even more chemical fertilizers and pesticides to replace the jobs these helpful creatures used to do for free!

He goes on to say:

Chemical pesticides also inadvertently enter the storm water system and end up in streams, rivers and lakes, where they may kill or harm insects, frogs, and fish. In some cases, pesticides can contaminate our drinking water.

Drinking water is such an emotional issue in this country. We saw over the recent months a number of first nations communities all under boil water advisories. There are a number of boil water advisories in other communities and there are a variety of things that can contribute to the contamination of our water. Certainly one of them is the cosmetic use of pesticides.

I found an interesting study that came from the National Water-Quality Assessment program in the United States. Canadian water and United States water share a lot of things in common. We like to drink it, we like our fish to swim in it, and we want it clean and safe for our children, our pets and for everybody to be able to consume. The study that was conducted is quite frightening. It said:

The frequency of pesticide contamination, however, is greater than expected. At least one pesticide was found in almost every water and fish sample collected from streams and in about one-half of all wells sampled. Moreover, individual pesticides seldom were found alone — almost every water and fish sample from streams and about one-half of samples from wells with a detected pesticide contained two or more pesticides.

The study went on to say:

For aquatic life and wildlife, however, NAWQA results indicate a high potential for problems in many streams, particularly in urban areas, where concentrations of more than one pesticide often approached or exceeded established water-quality guidelines.

Not only is this affecting our water quality, it is also affecting the fish and other critters that live in those streams, and we eat the fish. In addition, the study stated that:

Important questions remain unanswered about potential risks of pesticide contamination to humans and the environment. Currently, standards and guidelines are available only for a limited number of individual pesticides, do not account for mixtures of pesticides or for pesticide breakdown products, and are based on tests that have assessed a limited range of potential health and ecological effects. Long-term exposure to low-level mixtures of pesticide compounds, punctuated with seasonal pulses of higher concentrations, is the most common pattern of exposure, but the effects of this pattern are not yet well understood.

The study also mentioned the fact that the accumulation is often not understood.

In closing, I want to emphasize the fact that pesticide concentration has been found in salmon and in other fish that we consume. The accumulation process has not been well understood. I think it is time for us to call on the precautionary principle to say that unless people can unequivocally demonstrate that it is safe for us to consume these products that have been contaminated by pesticides, we should call for the ban of cosmetic pesticides.

● (1740)

Mr. Mario Silva (Davenport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I too share many of the concerns of the member opposite. I had this debate when I was on city council in Toronto. I was one of the people who was very supportive of banning pesticides. We do not yet know the full extent of the dangers of pesticides to our health, environment and drinking water, so we have to be extremely proactive.

Some of the initiatives in the past tried to educate people about the dangers, but we know very well that has not worked. I would certainly be supportive of a motion being put forward to limit pesticides or put some measures in place that would in fact ban the usage of pesticides in our country.

I am the vice-chair of the environment committee and right now it is looking at the CEPA legislation, the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, which deals with toxic substances that enter the environment and have immediate and long term harmful effects on the environment or human health.

If somehow this motion does not carry in the House, would she be in favour of moving this to the committee or pushing this forward to see if we could put some of those elements into the CEPA legislation as we have a statutory mandate to review it this year?

Ms. Jean Crowder: Mr. Speaker, I am ever hopeful that members of the House will see the light of day and support this important motion before us. However, in the absence of that, I know that our environment critic from Skeena—Bulkley Valley will be working closely with other members of the environment committee to ensure that initiatives are brought forward to do things like protect our water quality. We will be working hard on that issue.

Business of Supply

• (1745)

Mr. David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to compliment my colleague from Nanaimo—Cowichan for doing an excellent job of outlining why the time has come. We may not yet have the absolute 100% scientific information we would like have, but clearly we are at the point now where it is time for us to act in the interests of Canadians, particularly children when we think of them playing in the yard and walking down the street passing lawns, et cetera.

Like myself, the member has served on her local city council. I can remember struggling with this back in the 1980s on Hamilton city council at a time when those who wanted the manicured lawns as the priority said we did not have near enough scientific evidence to step in and do this. They were going to stay with their lawns because they did not want to deal with upset constituents.

We are now almost 20 years down the road looking at it on a national level. I wonder if the member would expand a little on why she is so comfortable that we can do this on a national level, removing it from the municipal level, and why it is appropriate at this time, given her sensitivity having been a councillor and knowing the need for autonomy, but also recognizing when it is time for senior orders of government to step in.

Ms. Jean Crowder: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for his very good question and support. Coming from municipal backgrounds, we have always been conscious when senior levels of government start to impose their will. However, in this particular case the federal government has a very clear and well defined role on approving pesticides.

It is the government's responsibility to determine the safety of a product and it falls within its purview to do that. I would expect that the role for the federal government here is the precautionary principle that I talked about earlier, but it is also the role of the federal government to take some leadership around this matter, particularly because it impacts on water quality. That is another place the federal government has a role. We have an inadequate drinking water policy in this country and this is one step that is clearly linked with water. This is an area for the federal government to demonstrate some very clear leadership.

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured, on behalf of Canada's environmental party, the NDP, to speak to this motion because that is the role that we have undertaken in this Parliament, as we did in the last Parliament. What we attempt to do as a party in the House, working in this corner of the four corners of the House, is to put forward environmental platforms and strong environmental interests, so that Canadians who are increasingly concerned about the environmental degradation that we see in this country have a party to look to. That is the role that we undertake. It is within that framework today that we are presenting this motion.

The motion calls for banning pesticides within dwelling houses, within range of schools, hospitals, offices or similar buildings. In other words, it is all about protecting the public. Although we do provide some grounds for exemptions, we do say very clearly that what we have to do is put the onus on manufacturers to show that their product is safe. This should not be a controversial subject. This

is something that all members of the House in all four corners of the House should be embracing.

It moves to protect the public at a time when the public, Canadians from coast to coast to coast, are increasingly preoccupied by the skyrocketing rates of cancer.

We have heard from a number of other members today. Quite frankly, I have been disappointed with some of the presentations that I have heard. Some members have been talking about the constitutionality of issues of the environment, as if the Constitution should come before protection of Canadians and keeping Canadians in good health and with a good quality environment.

We have also heard some members speak about the fact that the government should not intervene, that somehow this should be just left alone. The time for that is well past. It is time that we take our responsibility as parliamentarians seriously. It is time that we move to ban these pesticides in areas that are clearly spelled out in the NDP motion.

[*Translation*]

I would like to take a moment to explain why this important aspect has to be raised and why the motion is important for the future of the Canadians watching us this evening, who have watched all day with considerable interest.

There is scientific proof. We know there is a link between pesticides and cancer. For example, the use of pesticides in landscaping around the house doubles the risk of neuroblastoma, a cancer that occurs in children. There is a link between pesticides and skeletal anomalies, damage to the immune system and neurological damage. Pesticides often contain neurotoxins, which have a negative impact on the development of the brain.

We know as well that there is a link between pesticides and reproduction—the higher incidence of miscarriages, birth defects and problems with conception and pregnancy. We know as well that pesticides have an impact on sterility.

If we look at the use of pesticides per capita in all of the countries of the world, Canada is, unfortunately, sixth, after Australia, Italy, France, Belgium and the United States. That should be a warning.

There are, in fact, many links, and measures have to be taken.

• (1750)

[*English*]

What is the situation, when about cancer right now across the country? We know that about six million Canadians will be diagnosed with cancer. About three million will die from cancer. This is over the next 30 years. I am not talking about a small impact. We are talking about six million Canadians who have been diagnosed with cancer and three million Canadians who will die from it over 30 years. This comes from the Canadian strategy for cancer control.

We know that the direct cancer health care costs would be more than \$176 billion. Effectively, we are talking about the devastation that happens when communities and families are impacted.

Business of Supply

There have been some statements in the House today that somehow cancer is not the problem, that cancer rates have not risen. We know very well that childhood cancers have risen over 20% in 30 years. We have seen increasing levels of prostate cancer, non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, thyroid, testicular cancers are all increasing. All of these cancers have links to environmental contaminants.

We are not talking about a small issue. We are talking about an issue that will have an impact on millions and millions of Canadians over the next few decades. That is why we have the responsibility to take action. We have the responsibility to intervene. That is why Canada's environmental party, the NDP, put forward this motion today. We are debating with all the vigour and logic of our argument to get members in all four corners of the House to do the right thing, which is to take action.

It is not the right thing to say that maybe we do not like this line. It is not the right thing to say that the government should not be there protecting people. It is not the right thing to take these kinds of attitudes. The right thing for us to do is to adopt the motion and to move forward to protect Canadians.

Wendy Mesley, a well known journalist in Canada, has exposed to a rather great extent the persistence of environmental contaminants in her own bloodstream. Having gone through a very difficult bout with cancer, she got herself tested for 60 toxic chemicals, contaminants in the body. As we know, they found 44 toxic chemicals within her body. If we tested other members of the House, if we tested Canadians across the country, we would probably find similar types of environmental contaminants such as pesticides, which in the end, because of the link between pesticides and cancer, could be a contributory factor to the millions of cancer deaths that we anticipate in the next few decades.

What were the toxic chemicals that were found in her blood? One was polychlorinated biphenyls, otherwise known as PCBs. We know that PCBs are no longer produced or used in North America. The major source of exposure to PCBs today is the redistribution of PCBs already present in soil and water. In other words, they are not produced or used in North America any more. They are still contaminating and they are still a contributory factor to cancer.

For those who stay, we should do nothing, that we should just ignore the three million anticipated Canadian deaths over the next 30 years, here is a very valid and strong argument against that attitude.

Organochlorine pesticides, otherwise known as DDT, we also found in Wendy Mesley's body. We know that these are no longer used in Canada. Those contaminants were found in her blood.

Just a side note on this. The PCBs and the organochlorine pesticides are classified under California's Proposition 65, as suspected carcinogenics. Here we have an example from the United States. I know some members of this House like to follow American examples. Here we have the Americans in California saying that these are carcinogenic substances. There is obviously a link. In other parts the world, places like California, lawmakers are starting to move forward and to make those changes.

Cadmium and nickel were also found in her bloodstream.

●(1755)

Perhaps the strongest argument I can bring to our motion today, which we are urging all members to adopt, is the Canadian Cancer Society's position on the use of pesticides. It has said that they are concerned about the use of potentially carcinogenic substances. It bases its concern on the conclusion of the International Agency for Research on Cancer, which states that substances used in pesticides are classified as known, probably or possible carcinogens. The Canadian Cancer Society calls for a ban on the use of pesticides on lawns and gardens.

The evidence is pretty overwhelming, not just the evidence over the past few years, but the evidence that we have to consider as members of Parliament. I urge members in all four corners of this House to adopt the motion.

Mr. Bill Siksay (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am proud the NDP brought forward this motion. I think it is very clear to all of us that the use of pesticides in our society have caused significant health effects.

I am also proud that the city of Burnaby, a community that the member for Burnaby—New Westminster and I share, has also taken some strong measures in this area. In fact, I think the city of Burnaby was one of the leaders on the whole issue of the use of pesticides and herbicides for cosmetic purposes within the community. Also, the Burnaby School Board has taught many workshops for homeowners and people in the community about how to successfully do cosmetic things on their lawns and gardens without using pesticides, things like using specialized tools, specialized plant selection and protecting beneficial insects in our gardens and on our lawns. It has also done this work in conjunction with the B.C. Landscape & Nursery Association.

There are options. The program called "Let It Grow, Naturally" has been a success in Burnaby.

Why has taken the federal government so long to act in this area, when the information is so plain and the solution is staring us right in the face?

Mr. Peter Julian: Mr. Speaker, the question of the member for Burnaby—Douglas is a very valid one. In the city of Burnaby, Mayor Derek Corrigan and both the Burnaby city council and the Burnaby school board have been leaders in the field municipally, showing that there is life after pesticides. Indeed, the kind of measures that he spelled out are very important. These are the kinds of effective measures taken locally by our city of Burnaby and they have made a big difference in the lives of citizens.

He mentioned Burnaby and some of the leaders. I want to mention the name of Mae Burrows, the executive director of the Labour Environmental Alliance Society. She is a Burnaby resident who lives in my riding. She has been fighting for warning labels about carcinogens on products and has been a real pioneer in the field as well. Burnaby, not only at the municipal level but also at the activist level, is a leader in this area of improving the quality of life for citizens, providing environmental protection and good quality of environment, which we all want to see, and moving to protect its citizens.

Business of Supply

His question was why the federal government had not acted. I think it is very clear. We had the Liberal Party in power. Now we have the Conservative Party in power. However, effectively what we need is Canada's environmental party to continue to grow in its influence in the House so we can get legislation that will make such a difference in the lives of citizens.

• (1800)

Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, both my colleagues from Burnaby had very good interventions, capsulizing what we are trying to do today.

We have heard some speakers on the Liberal side, one who was a medical doctor in fact, deny the science. The member quoted from one study written by an industry representative who argued against banning 2,4,5-T, which is agent orange. She thought agent orange should in fact be available on the shelves, so that is a credibility issue.

Even if we cannot ever prove the causal link between one particular chemical and one particular illness because of the chemical soup we are exposed to, should the precautionary principle not then prevail, especially when it pertains to children, pregnant women and vulnerable people?

Mr. Peter Julian: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Winnipeg Centre for all the work he has done on behalf of Canada's environmental party in the NDP, pushing forward a plan of protection for the precautionary principle. He has been a real leader in this field since his election back in 1997 to ensure that Canadians are protected. This is all about protecting Canadians and giving them a better quality of life.

He mentioned some of the Liberal interventions. I have one of the transcripts from the debate earlier today. A Liberal member from British Columbia, I regret to say, said that 99% of pesticides were naturally occurring and that there was no problem at all. That is a bizarre intervention which shows where the Liberal Party is today. It is very similar to the Conservative Party. Neither party wants to act on behalf of Canadians. Neither party wants to bring forward legislation that will improve the quality of lives of Canadians, and that is shocking to me and very disappointing.

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank all the hon. members who participated in the debate. It has been a very instructive and informative debate on the issue of pesticides and their impact on health.

One of the reasons I want to speak to this issue is that back in 1979 there was a train derailment in Mississauga. The train was carrying a number of chemicals, pesticides, chlorines and toluenes, all kinds of very dangerous goods. There was a lot of concern. The entire city was evacuated, some 250,000 people. I remember sleeping on someone's floor for three or four days while the problem was dealt with.

There was a firefighter who had received some serious lung damage as a consequence of this derailment. It was back at that time that I first realized the risk that firefighters are put in when they go out to do their duty.

Over the years we in this place have talked a lot about such things as that type of exposure and that the life expectancy of firefighters is

about five years lower than the national average. As a consequence the House passed a motion that actually increased the accrual rate in the Canada pension plan to allow firefighters to earn a full Canada pension plan benefit based on a shortened career. Usually by age 50 many firefighters cannot meet the physical requirements.

The issue of chemicals and pesticides in our society is a matter of serious health importance. It affects us in many different ways.

I congratulate the NDP for bringing forward the motion and explaining to Canadians some of the facts and the figures about the health impacts of pesticide use in our everyday lives.

I was most concerned about the experience that the Pest Control Products Act and the agency have had in terms of going back and looking at pesticides which had previously been approved as safe for use. Now we find that amendments to legislation that were considered have been delayed in terms of their implementation to get the changes made to the act, because of the number of changed opinions on certain aspects of pesticides regulated by the Pest Control Products Act.

I have to make this very clear because it is important that members understand this. This is a supply day motion. It is a votable motion. It is binding on the government. Many members, including myself, have raised some small points of detail that maybe there are some unintended consequences. I have heard this in other members' speeches. I am concerned that the motion may fail because of a minor technicality or a small nuance that had not been detected.

I asked the mover of the motion whether he would consider a minor amendment. The minor amendment would basically be at the beginning where the motion says, "That, in the opinion of the House," and it would state "that the government consider the advisability that". It makes it that the issue is still to be considered but it does express clearly the opinion of the House. It would make all the difference in the world.

By the end of my speech I am hoping to seek a head nod that the NDP members would consider an amendment that they would have to approve to their motion, if they so wished. I think there are many members in this place who would like to vote for this motion because they understand that this does not hurt rural circumstances. There are enough exemptions.

• (1805)

For instance, even with regard to schools, hospitals and dwellings, there is an exemption that in a closed building, the chemicals that are regulated under the act could be used, as long as they were addressing an infestation or other need to destroy pests.

We are on the horns of a dilemma here, and I think members understand that. There is no member in this place who does not understand that the concoction of chemicals that we use in everyday life, which are probably under our kitchen sinks are much the same.

Business of Supply

Before I became a member of Parliament I used to be the treasurer of the United Co-operatives of Ontario, an agricultural co-op. This co-op was into seeds and grains as well as chemicals and fertilizers. I visited every one of its 103 retail outlets across the province of Ontario. I knew it when I went into the area where the pesticides were stored, because I could smell them even though they were in unopened packages. There was something in the air.

This motion basically says that there are a lot of things that we do not see because the concentrations may not be high enough. We know from history that there are a lot of cases where even small doses over a continuous period of time can build up and the impact will not be realized until some threshold of concentration builds up in the lungs or somewhere else in the body.

In this place we have talked a lot about environmental impacts. We have talked a lot about things like the impact of particulate matter even with regard to climate change and greenhouse gases. Many of the processes that create greenhouse gases also create particulate matter, which means that is a threat to the health of Canadians as well. Greenhouse gas reductions and climate change priorities are important because they are health issues as well.

Today's debate is extremely important, but the motion has some problems. If the motion were an act of Parliament, if we just numbered the clauses and gave it the details, I am pretty sure the words in the motion would not pass the sniff test. They would not pass through a committee. They would have to be amended substantially. Parliament is faced with voting on this motion. There is no chance to amend it. There is no chance to make it better. It is just a matter of voting on it and it becomes law because the government will be bound to enforce it. That is unfortunate because the motion's intent is good.

I am going to support the motion regardless. That is why I am speaking here. I am going to support it on the basis of its intent, but I certainly want to raise the issue about the form. Most members who spoke to this motion talked about it being difficult to read and maybe a little too detailed. It raised the spectre that there may be unintended consequences.

I also raised the issue earlier about jurisdictional responsibilities. It is not inconsequential to legislation. Other jurisdictions have jurisdiction over the use of pesticides in their own municipalities and regions. There are some points that could be discussed.

I hope Canadians appreciate that the most important thing is that Parliament today raised yet again an important issue with regard to the health and well-being of Canadians, but not in a draconian fashion dealing with the economic viability of agriculture in Canada, nor would it interfere with business or industry in the normal case. The motion cautions all Canadians that when they use pesticides on their properties, in their homes and in and around places the public occupies, remnants linger and there are potential problems over the longer term. It is an important caveat for all of us to know.

I want to support this motion. I would like to move an amendment that after the word "that" the words "in the opinion of the House" be deleted and that they be replaced with the words "the government consider the advisability that". It would now read "That the government consider the advisability that beginning on April 22",

et cetera. I would ask the consent of the mover to move this amendment.

● (1810)

The Deputy Speaker: 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. Since the sponsor is not present in the chamber to give his or her consent, in this case his consent, the amendment cannot be moved at this time.

[*Translation*]

It being 6:15 p.m., it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the supply proceedings now before the House.

The question is on the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Deputy Speaker: All those in favour will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Deputy Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: No.

The Deputy Speaker: In my opinion the nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: Call in the members.

[*English*]

● (1850)

[*Translation*]

(The House divided on the motion, which was negated on the following division:)

(*Division No. 7*)

YEAS

Members

Alghabra	Angus
Atamanenko	Bagnell
Bains	Barnes
Beaumier	Bélangier
Bell (Vancouver Island North)	Bennett
Black	Blaikie
Bonin	Brown (Oakville)
Chan	Charlton
Chow	Christopherson
Coderre	Comartin
Comuzzi	Cotler
Crowder	Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley)
D'Amours	Davies
Dewar	Dhaliwal
Dhalla	Dosanjh
Dryden	Folco
Fry	Godfrey
Godin	Guarnieri
Holland	Ignatieff
Jennings	Julian
Kadis	Karetak-Lindell
Khan	Layton
LeBlanc	Malhi

Business of Supply

Maloney
 Martin (Winnipeg Centre)
 Martin (Sault Ste. Marie)
 Mathysen
 McGuinty
 Merasty
 Murphy (Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe)
 Nash
 Owen
 Patry
 Priddy
 Ratansi
 Regan
 Savage
 Scarpaleggia
 Siksay
 Simard
 Stronach
 Tonks
 Wilson
 Zed — 87

Marston
 Martin (LaSalle—Émard)
 Masse
 McDonough
 McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
 Minna
 Murphy (Charlottetown)
 Neville
 Pacetti
 Peterson
 Proulx
 Redman
 Rodriguez
 Savoie
 Scott
 Silva
 Stoffer
 Szabo
 Wasylcia-Leis
 Wrzesniewski

Lukiwski
 Lunney
 MacAulay
 MacKenzie
 Manning
 Marleau
 Matthews
 McCallum
 McTeague
 Ménard (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin)
 Merrifield
 Mills
 Moore (Fundy Royal)
 Nadeau
 Norlock
 Obhrai
 Ouellet
 Paquette
 Perron
 Picard
 Poilievre
 Preston
 Reid
 Ritz
 Roy
 Scheer
 Sgro
 Simms
 Smith
 Sorenson
 St-Hilaire
 Stanton
 Storseth
 Sweet
 Thibault (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques)
 Thibault (West Nova)
 Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)
 Tilson
 Trost
 Tweed
 Van Kesteren
 Vellacott
 Vincent
 Wallace
 Warawa
 Watson
 Yelich — 207

Lunn
 Lussier
 MacKay (Central Nova)
 Malo
 Mark
 Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)
 Mayes
 McGuire
 Ménard (Hochelaga)
 Menzies
 Miller
 Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)
 Mourani
 Nicholson
 O'Connor
 Oda
 Pallister
 Paradis
 Petit
 Plamondon
 Prentice
 Rajotte
 Richardson
 Rota
 Sauvageau
 Schellenberger
 Shipley
 Skelton
 Solberg
 St-Cyr
 St. Denis
 Steckle
 Strahl
 Temelkovski
 Thompson (Wild Rose)
 Toews
 Turner
 Valley
 Van Loan
 Verner
 Wolpe
 Wappel
 Warkentin
 Williams

NAYS

Members

Abbott
 Albrecht
 Allison
 Anderson
 Arthur
 Baird
 Batters
 Bellavance
 Bernier
 Bezan
 Blackburn
 Blaney
 Boshcoff
 Boucher
 Breitzkreuz
 Brown (Barrie)
 Brunelle
 Calkins
 Cannon (Pontiac)
 Carrie
 Casey
 Chamberlain
 Clement
 Cullen (Etobicoke North)
 Cuzner
 Day
 Del Mastro
 Deschamps
 Doyle
 Dykstra
 Emerson
 Faille
 Finley
 Flaherty
 Fontana
 Gagnon
 Gallant
 Gauthier
 Goodale
 Gourde
 Grewal
 Guergis
 Hanger
 Harris
 Hawn
 Hiebert
 Hinton
 Jaffer
 Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
 Keeper
 Komarnicki
 Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
 Laframboise
 Lalonde
 Lauzon
 Lee
 Lemieux
 Lévesque

Abłonczy
 Allen
 Anders
 André
 Asselin
 Barbot
 Bell (North Vancouver)
 Benoit
 Bevilacqua
 Bigras
 Blais
 Bonsant
 Bouchard
 Bourgeois
 Brown (Leeds—Grenville)
 Bruinooge
 Byrne
 Cannan (Kelowna—Lake Country)
 Cardin
 Carrier
 Casson
 Chong
 Crête
 Cummins
 Davidson
 DeBellefeuille
 Demers
 Devolin
 Duceppe
 Easter
 Epp
 Fast
 Fitzpatrick
 Fletcher
 Freeman
 Galipeau
 Gaudet
 Goldring
 Goodyear
 Graham
 Guay
 Guimond
 Harper
 Harvey
 Hearn
 Hill
 Hubbard
 Jean
 Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)
 Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
 Kotto
 Laforest
 Lake
 Lapierre
 Lavallée
 Lemay
 Lessard
 Loubier

PAIRED

Members

Ambrose

Bachand — 2

The Speaker: I declare the motion lost.

OPPOSITION MOTION—KYOTO PROTOCOL

The House resumed from May 11 consideration of the motion.

The Speaker: Pursuant to order made May 11, 2006, the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the opposition motion standing in the name of Mr. Bigras.

● (1855)

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

(Division No. 8)

YEAS

Members

Alghabra
 Angus
 Atamanenko
 Bains
 Barnes
 Bélanger

André
 Asselin
 Bagnell
 Barbot
 Beaumier
 Bell (Vancouver Island North)

Business of Supply

Bell (North Vancouver)	Bellavance		
Bennett	Bevilacqua		
Bigras	Black		
Blaikie	Blais		
Bonin	Bonsant	Abbott	Ablonczy
Boshcoff	Bouchard	Albrecht	Allen
Bourgeois	Brown (Oakville)	Allison	Anders
Brunelle	Byrne	Anderson	Arthur
Cardin	Carrier	Baird	Batters
Chamberlain	Chan	Benoit	Bernier
Charlton	Chow	Bezan	Blackburn
Christopherson	Coderre	Blaney	Boucher
Comartin	Comuzzi	Breitkreuz	Brown (Leeds—Grenville)
Cotler	Crête	Brown (Barrie)	Bruninooge
Crowder	Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley)	Calkins	Cannan (Kelowna—Lake Country)
Cullen (Etobicoke North)	Cuzner	Cannon (Pontiac)	Carrie
D'Amours	Davies	Casey	Casson
DeBellefeuille	Demers	Chong	Clement
Deschamps	Dewar	Cummins	Davidson
Dhaliwal	Dhalla	Day	Del Mastro
Dosanjh	Dryden	Devolin	Doyle
Duceppe	Easter	Dykstra	Emerson
Faillie	Folco	Epp	Fast
Fontana	Freeman	Finley	Fitzpatrick
Fry	Gagnon	Flaherty	Fletcher
Gaudet	Gauthier	Galipeau	Gallant
Godfrey	Godin	Goldring	Goodyear
Goodale	Graham	Gourde	Grewal
Guarnieri	Guay	Guergis	Hanger
Guimond	Holland	Harper	Harris
Hubbard	Ignatieff	Harvey	Hawn
Jennings	Julian	Hearn	Hiebert
Kadis	Karetak-Lindell	Hill	Hinton
Keeper	Khan	Jaffer	Jean
Kotto	Laforest	Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)	Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)
Laframboise	Lalonde	Kenney (Calgary Southeast)	Komarnicki
Lapierre	Lavallée	Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)	Lake
Layton	LeBlanc	Lauzon	Lemieux
Lee	Lemay	Lukiwski	Lunn
Lessard	Lévesque	Lunney	MacKay (Central Nova)
Loubier	Lussier	MacKenzie	Manning
MacAulay	Malhi	Mark	Mayes
Malo	Maloney	Menzies	Merrifield
Marleau	Marston	Miller	Mills
Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)	Martin (LaSalle—Émard)	Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)	
Martin (Sault Ste. Marie)	Masse	Moore (Fundy Royal)	
Mathysen	Matthews	Nicholson	Norlock
McCallum	McDonough	O'Connor	Obhrai
McGuinty	McGuire	Oda	Pallister
McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)	McTeague	Paradis	Petit
Ménard (Hochelega)	Ménard (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin)	Poilievre	Prentice
Merasty	Minna	Preston	Rajotte
Mourani	Murphy (Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe)	Reid	Richardson
Murphy (Charlottetown)	Nadeau	Ritz	Scheer
Nash	Neville	Schellenberger	Shipleigh
Ouellet	Paquette	Skelton	Smith
Pacetti	Perron	Solberg	Sorenson
Patry	Picard	Stanton	Storseth
Peterson	Priddy	Strahl	Sweet
Plamondon	Ratansi	Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)	Thompson (Wild Rose)
Proulx	Regan	Tilson	Toews
Redman	Rota	Trost	Turner
Rodriguez	Sauvageau	Tweed	Van Kesteren
Roy	Savoie	Van Loan	Vellacott
Savage	Scott	Verner	Wallace
Scarpaleggia	Siksay	Warawa	Warkentin
Sgro	Simard	Watson	Williams
Silva	St-Cyr	Yelich— 125	
Simms	St. Denis		
St-Hilaire	Stoffer		
Steckle	Szabo		
Stronach	Temelkovski		
Telegdi			
Thibault (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques)			
Thibault (West Nova)	Valley		
Tonks	Volpe	Ambrose	Bachand— 2
Vincent	Wasylcia-Leis		
Wappel	Wrzesnewskyj		
Wilson			
Zed— 169			

NAYS

Members

PAIRED

Members

Adjournment Proceedings

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

• (1905)

[English]

CANADA POST

Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, a couple of weeks ago I asked the following question of the Minister of Transport:

Mr. Speaker, the minister will know that Canada Post is pursuing injunctions against a number of small Canadian businesses that are in the business of international re-mailing, some of which have been in business for 20 years. Thousands of employees will lose their jobs, hundreds of businesses will close and Canada will lose \$150 million in business.

What will it be: monopolistic abuses by Canada Post or vigorous competition from small business? Will the minister use his authority under the Financial Administration Act and tell Canada Post to withdraw its assault on small business?

The answer was as follows:

—it is a very important subject. I have received representation not only from members opposite but also members from our political party. We are looking at the issue now and we will be taking note not only of that issue, but we will be advising the House as to what we want to do in the coming days.

If we break down the answer, we see that it is very important, that MPs on both sides of the House are keenly interested in the issue, that the minister is looking at the issue, and that he is going to advise the House in the coming days.

I would suggest that the coming days have arrived and that the role of the post office is indeed quite inconsistent with what is good business practice. While the minister looks at the issue, the post office pursues its injunction remedies. All of these re-mailing businesses are therefore at risk. How can they carry on?

I do not know what experience you have had with small business, Mr. Speaker. I can see you shaking your head, having been in this chamber for many years and not having run a small business, but you can appreciate, however, that many small businesses are day to day operations and frequently do not have huge amounts of capital to go to on a rainy day. Here they are, at risk, and competing with a monopoly that has gross revenues of \$7 billion and is using the best legal services that money can buy, frankly. It is trying to run them out of town.

We have a whole re-mailing business that is worth a total of \$150 million, spread over quite a number of small businesses, versus a \$7 billion monopoly. It is a bit of a David and Goliath situation. It would be interesting to know what the minister prefers. Does he prefer monopolistic abuse or does he prefer vigorous competition?

Even Canada Post, in its annual report, noted:

In the last 20 years, we have seen a fundamental change in the global communications industry. As mailers provide economic incentives for customers to switch to electronic communication, and consolidated invoices and statements, the concept of “exclusive privilege” is eroding. As a practical matter, the value of the

exclusive privilege on letters, put in place as a means to cover the cost of providing Universal Service, has been lessened.

I see that I am being given the sign, so to speak, and, not to put a stamp on it, I will conclude by saying that the post office is using its exclusive privilege to effectively destroy these small businesses, and therefore we are calling upon the minister to make his decision now.

Mr. Brian Jean (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am wondering why the member, when he was sitting on the government side just months ago, did not do something about this issue. The Ontario Court of Appeal came out with a judgment over a year ago. I am wondering why, if he had the opportunity to do so, he did not.

I currently own three small businesses. I have run three or four others in the past and I can tell the member that there are competing interests. We are taking this seriously because it is a very important issue.

On another point, I can assure the House that we are not going to take any lessons at all from the Liberals on how to run a business or how to run a government effectively in the best interests of Canadians. I am hopeful the member is not suggesting that we ignore the court decisions that have been rendered, including the Ontario Court of Appeal. I am certain it is not his wish that this government should ignore the courts.

I am happy to rise today on the issue of international remailing. I can assure everyone that this is a very important issue to this government. That is why we were taking some time to make an appropriate decision which will be in the best interests of Canadians, having regard to the universal postal service that all Canadians have come to love and enjoy.

Canadians receive and send mail all over the country for a mere 51¢, whether it be one block or 1,000 miles, by ferry or by other means of transportation. This government cares about rural, urban and remote Canadian communities. That is why the minister will make a decision which is in the best interests of Canadians.

Canada's geography, low population density, outlying isolated communities, populations and climate provide, quite frankly, a larger challenge to Canada Post than other countries. In fact, I suggest that we have more challenges than any other nation's post office both in relation to delivery and also in regard to the environment, and other issues that are hot topics today.

Despite these challenges, Canada Post, an arm's length corporation, which means in essence that we are not supposed to deal with its day to day operations, has a 96% on time delivery of mail. What a great record to brag about for Canada Post.

Indeed, when we look at the entire world, Canada has one of the lowest domestic rates for any mail in the world. That speaks volumes about the quality of service. We do this without receiving any tax benefits or funding from Canadians taxpayers. This is done on a profitable basis. As a result, we have to take a look at what takes place.

Adjournment Proceedings

VETERANS

Most importantly, we have a universal delivery service, which means that we cannot always deliver for 51¢. Obviously, a letter from here to Fort Chipewyan is going to cost more than 51¢ to deliver. As a result of that, we have to look at universal delivery, which includes what the courts have put forward as a jurisdiction that is within Canada Post's mandate. That jurisdiction means that it has the right for not only domestic mail but also international mail. The court has found that, and I am certain my friend does not want this government to ignore our courts.

We are aware, and many Canadians do not know this, that these international remailers are actually subsidiaries or associated with large foreign postal services. Indeed, these remailers employ Canadians, but Canada Post, of course, as everybody in the House knows, is the sixth largest employer of Canadians in Canada. These remailers actually collect the mail in bulk, ship it out of the country and then mail it locally at cheaper rates because there are cheaper rates available to them through foreign post offices. These—

• (1910)

The Deputy Speaker: I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member but his four minutes have expired. The hon. member for Scarborough—Guildwood.

Hon. John McKay: Mr. Speaker, the bromides offered opposite are misleading, to say the least. The hon. member will recollect that the matter was before the courts up until just a few months ago. Now the decision has been made. The decision has been made on an excessively narrow interpretation of a particular section of the exclusive privilege of the Canada Post Corporation Act. Now we are pursuing remedies.

The answer is not that this was before the courts and we could not do anything. Canada Post is pursuing its remedies. I am sure the hon. member will appreciate the difference in law between remedies and the decisions themselves.

I am not asking him to ignore the courts. I am asking the minister to use the government's decision-making ability. The Government of Canada is the sole shareholder of Canada Post Corporation. It has a supervisory jurisdiction with respect to this corporation. It can override management. I am asking the hon. member and his minister to override the Canada Post monopolistic excesses here.

• (1915)

Mr. Brian Jean: Mr. Speaker, when the member was in government months ago he had the opportunity to make the decision but did not, and now he brings that forward to us.

Now he is telling us that not only should we ignore the courts, but we should ignore the French interpretation that came from the judgment. It came from a French statute. There is an English and a French statute and the court interpreted the French statute as being more specific and more narrow.

Is the hon. member suggesting that we ignore the French interpretation? I would suggest not.

The minister will do what is in the best interest of Canadians. We have a universal postal guarantee across this huge country. The decision will be made but all members can be assured that the decision made by the minister, by the government and by the Prime Minister will be in the best interest of Canadians long term.

Hon. Robert Thibault (West Nova, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on January 11, in Woodstock, New Brunswick, giddy with the thought of power, the Prime Minister promised that a Conservative government would offer full and immediate compensation to soldiers and civilians who were exposed to agent orange or to other toxic defoliants at the Canadian Forces Base in Gagetown, New Brunswick. He promised that veterans would be given the benefit of the doubt in their claims for compensation.

The Prime Minister made these promises at the height of a tight campaign with the express goal of winning key votes in New Brunswick ridings. Yet, after three months in power, the Conservative government has made absolutely no progress on this file. In fact, the Minister of Veterans Affairs is backing away from the Conservatives' campaign commitments by saying that he refuses to be pressured into compensating victims.

Veterans in my riding listened to the throne speech and read the budget with interest but agent orange was not mentioned once. There were no commitments to act on this issue and no funds were earmarked for compensation. Not a single penny was put aside.

When I raised this issue in question period on May 5, the parliamentary secretary shrugged off my questions. She claimed that the government deemed this as a priority and that it would deliver. Where are the details? Parliament does not have them. Veterans groups certainly do not have them. I cannot help but wonder if the minister made promises during an election that he had no intention of keeping.

When he made those election promises, the Minister of Veterans Affairs knew this file quite well. He was a member of the Standing Committee on National Defence and Veterans Affairs which heard expert witnesses from the Department of National Defence at two special meetings in June and November 2005. As a matter of fact, he was specifically sworn in as a member for those meetings, being otherwise an associate member, but was brought in because of his expertise on this file.

When he was in opposition he hounded witnesses at the committee and self-righteously dismissed their hard work on this file as a mere public relations exercise.

In June last year, the minister attacked the expert witnesses who appeared before the committee claiming that they were misleading Parliament and had not done their homework. He demanded that the witnesses draw conclusions about the health effects of exposure to agent orange before the Department of National Defence had completed its research.

Adjournment Proceedings

At the committee meetings in November 2005, the current Minister of Veterans Affairs accused government officials of deliberately withholding information from the public. He asserted that the Department of National Defence could release the records of veterans who had been exposed immediately if they so desired. He berated their witnesses.

In fact, the current Minister of Veterans Affairs went so far as to suggest that recommendations made to the Department of National Defence were sufficient to begin compensating those whose health was affected as a result of exposure to agent orange.

If the Conservative government was so sure that it knew the right and responsible thing to do when it was in opposition, why is it so unwilling to act now?

The parliamentary secretary's assurances that the government is taking action to develop proposals to deliver on its commitments rings hollow. If I were more cynical, I might wonder whether this whole charade was a public relations exercise to win an election.

Had we only seen this type of thing with agent orange perhaps we could explain it, but we know well that with hepatitis C, we have heard and seen the same thing: a lot of talk but zero action and not a penny.

• (1920)

Mrs. Betty Hinton (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this is a government that keeps its promises. We have kept our promise to give hard-working Canadians a break and cut the GST by 1%. We have kept our promise to give families a choice in child care. We have kept our promise to introduce legislation to crack down on crime and make our communities safer. We have kept our promise to put government on a path to real accountability and restore Canadians' faith in their government. We will keep our promise to respond to concerns raised by members of the Canadian Forces, veterans and area residents about the health effects of defoliants used at CFB Gagetown.

The Government of Canada will not wait for the resolution of the class action suit to provide that response. Veterans Affairs Canada has taken the lead role with regard to compensation issues. Departmental officials are currently examining policy options for government consideration and this work is progressing well. This matter continues to be handled on a priority basis as we work toward a timely and appropriate response.

The fact-finding exercise led by former New Brunswick health minister, Dr. Dennis Furlong, is continuing. In this work, Dr. Furlong is supported by the advisory panel made up of academics, scientists, stakeholders, including veterans.

We are working with the Department of National Defence to identify all current and former civilian and military employees of CFB Gagetown and to determine what defoliants were used, when and where. Studies are also under way to determine the impact of defoliants on the environment and people's health.

The independent experts conducting this research are doing everything they can to advance the work as quickly as possible, and this is an open process. The results of this research will be passed on to the public.

In the interim, we invite veterans who believe they may have an illness associated with exposure to agent orange or other herbicides at CFB Gagetown to apply for a disability award through Veterans Affairs. These applications are being reviewed on a priority basis, and the department is doing everything it can to help those who apply for an award gather the information they need to support their claim.

Any new research findings will be incorporated into our decisions on these applications and any application or decision on awards that may be affected by the research will be reviewed automatically.

All cases where veterans, who served at Gagetown in the mid-60s, have a condition related to agent orange exposure, including cases that have already been adjudicated, are being reviewed to ensure nothing has been overlooked in pulling together evidence to support veterans' claims. When we weigh that evidence, the benefit of the doubt is being applied to ensure fairness.

The government remains committed to resolving this matter as quickly and as fairly as possible. That resolution will be based on facts and fairness, not on political expediency.

Hon. Robert Thibault: Mr. Speaker, I apologize and understand if you have that look of déjà vu in your eyes. That is not very much different than the answer we would have had by the previous government, which that member, and especially the Minister of Veterans Affairs, would have said was totally unacceptable, that the cheques should be rolling out right away.

We heard this with hepatitis C, that we should not be working with the lawyers and negotiating and identifying who they are. The cheques should be going out right away, but they are not.

Some might call that hypocritical when we promise one thing, but deliver another. I do not think I can use that word in the House. It would not be parliamentary. However, it is the same as when I heard that all cabinet ministers would be elected and that we would have an elected Senate. I was duped, as were all members. I never realized it would only be the Prime Minister who would vote in such senatorial elections, that we would have members of cabinet elected from the Senate and that we could not hear from the Department of Public Works. I know I cannot use the word "hypocrite", but the definition seems to fit. The actions are different from what we were promised.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member cannot do indirectly what he is not supposed to do directly.

The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs.

• (1925)

Mrs. Betty Hinton: Mr. Speaker, it is a shame that the member opposite would use a serious issue such as agent orange to play partisan games in the House, but I am not responsible for his actions, he is.

Adjournment Proceedings

The difference between the previous government and this government is that we are going to do what we say. The government will keep its promise. We are doing the research and we are moving forward. As we proceed, we are doing everything possible to ensure veterans are aware of their rights to submit applications for disability awards.

We are helping veterans make those applications as complete as possible. We are ensuring that any new evidence, which may add to their applications, is included. We are reviewing those applications on a priority basis. We are not waiting for the completion of the class action suit.

The process is moving forward as quickly as considerations of fairness and good science permit. To ensure fairness, we must have the facts. And the fact is, the government will keep its promise.

The Deputy Speaker: The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24 (1).

(The House adjourned at 7:26 p.m.)

CONTENTS

Tuesday, May 16, 2006

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

Witness Protection Program Act

Mr. Blaney	1409
Bill C-268. Introduction and first reading	1409
(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed)	1409

Committees of the House

Citizenship and Immigration

Mr. Doyle	1409
-----------------	------

National Peacekeepers' Day Act

Mr. St. Denis	1409
Bill C-287. Introduction and first reading	1409
(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed)	1409

Business of the House

Mr. Nicholson	1409
Motion	1409
(Motion agreed to)	1410

Petitions

Temiskaming First Nation Aboriginal Community

Mr. Lemay	1410
-----------------	------

Bill C-222

Mr. Mark	1410
----------------	------

Taxation

Mr. Mark	1410
----------------	------

Questions on the Order Paper

Mr. Bruinooge	1410
---------------------	------

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

Business of Supply

Opposition Motion—Pesticides

Mr. Layton	1410
Motion	1410
Mr. Bagnell	1412
Mr. Cannan	1412
Ms. Savoie	1412
Mr. Blaney	1413
Mr. Bagnell	1414
Mr. Brown (Barrie)	1414
Mr. Bagnell	1415
Ms. Savoie	1415
Mr. Norlock	1416
Ms. Savoie	1417
Mr. Brison	1417
Ms. Savoie	1420
Mr. Hawn	1420
Mr. Norlock	1420
Ms. Wasylycia-Leis	1421
Mr. Bigras	1421
Ms. McDonough	1423
Ms. Davies	1424

Mr. Stanton	1424
Mr. Martin (Winnipeg Centre)	1425
Mr. Easter	1426
Ms. Davies	1426
Ms. Wasylycia-Leis	1427
Mr. Cannan	1428
Mr. Stanton	1428
Mr. Bezan	1429
Mr. Easter	1430
Ms. Wasylycia-Leis	1431
Mr. Ritz	1431
Mr. Murphy (Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe)	1432
Mr. Easter	1433
Mrs. Mathysen	1433
Ms. Nash	1434
Mr. Stanton	1435
Mr. Easter	1435
Mr. Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)	1436
Ms. Savoie	1437
Mr. Martin (Winnipeg Centre)	1437
Mr. Easter	1437
Ms. Nash	1438
Ms. Bell (Vancouver Island North)	1439

Auditor General's Report

The Speaker	1439
-------------------	------

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Arden Leung

Mr. Cummins	1440
-------------------	------

Manufacturing Industry

Mr. Telegdi	1440
-------------------	------

National Patriots Day

Mr. Loubier	1440
-------------------	------

Burnaby Lake

Mr. Julian	1440
------------------	------

Conservative Government

Mr. Ritz	1440
----------------	------

Chief Francis Flett

Ms. Keeper	1441
------------------	------

MusicFest Canada

Mr. Komarnicki	1441
----------------------	------

Trois-Rivières Symphony

Ms. Brunelle	1441
--------------------	------

Auditor General's Report

Mr. Devolin	1441
-------------------	------

Canada-U.S. Border

Ms. Dhalla	1442
------------------	------

Auditor General's Report	
Mr. Williams	1442
Skin Cancer	
Ms. Priddy	1442
Prairie Giant	
Mr. Goodale	1442
Manufacturing Sector	
Mr. André	1442
Nunavut Awareness	
Ms. Karetak-Lindell	1443
Conservative Government	
Mr. Preston	1443

ORAL QUESTIONS

The Environment	
Mr. Graham (Toronto Centre)	1443
Mr. Harper	1443
Mr. Graham (Toronto Centre)	1443
Mr. Harper	1443
Mr. Graham (Toronto Centre)	1444
Mr. Harper	1444
Francophonie	
Mr. Patry	1444
Ms. Verner	1444
Mr. Patry	1444
Ms. Verner	1444
The Environment	
Mr. Duceppe	1444
Mr. Harper	1444
Mr. Duceppe	1444
Mr. Harper	1444
Mr. Bigras	1445
Mr. Warawa	1445
Mr. Bigras	1445
Mr. Warawa	1445
National Defence	
Mr. Layton	1445
Mr. Harper	1445
Mr. Layton	1445
Mr. Harper	1445
The Environment	
Mrs. Jennings	1446
Mr. Warawa	1446
Mrs. Jennings	1446
Mr. Warawa	1446
EnerGuide Program	
Mr. McTeague	1446
Mr. Lunn	1446
Mr. McTeague	1446
Mr. Lunn	1446
Francophonie	
Mrs. Barbot	1446
Ms. Verner	1446

Mrs. Barbot	1447
Ms. Verner	1447
Softwood Lumber	
Mr. Paquette	1447
Mr. Emerson	1447
Mr. Paquette	1447
Mr. Emerson	1447
Canada-U.S. Border	
Mr. Maloney	1447
Mr. Day	1447
Mr. Maloney	1447
Mr. Day	1448
Mr. Chan	1448
Mr. Day	1448
Mr. Chan	1448
Mr. Day	1448
Firearms Registry	
Mr. Breitreuz	1448
Mr. Day	1448
David Dingwall	
Mr. Christopherson	1448
Mr. Baird	1448
Mr. Christopherson	1449
Mr. Baird	1449
Equalization Payments	
Mr. McCallum (Markham—Unionville)	1449
Mr. Flaherty	1449
Mr. McCallum (Markham—Unionville)	1449
Mr. Flaherty	1449
Public Works and Government Services	
Mr. Bains	1449
Mr. Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)	1449
Mr. Bains	1449
Mr. Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)	1450
Passports	
Mr. Ménard (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin)	1450
Mr. Day	1450
Mr. Ménard (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin)	1450
Mr. Day	1450
Firearms Registry	
Mr. Cotler	1450
Mr. Day	1450
National Defence	
Mrs. Gallant	1450
Mr. O'Connor	1450
Canada-U.S. Border	
Mr. Martin (Sault Ste. Marie)	1450
Mr. MacKay	1451
Mr. Martin (Sault Ste. Marie)	1451
Mr. MacKay	1451
Arms Exports	
Mr. Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)	1451
Mr. MacKay	1451

Aboriginal Affairs	
Mr. Cannan	1451
Mr. Prentice	1451
Presence in Gallery	
The Speaker	1451
Points of Order	
Oral Questions	
Mr. Martin (Sault Ste. Marie)	1452
Mr. Goodale	1452
Mr. MacKay	1452
Mr. Murphy (Charlottetown)	1452
Mr. Dewar	1452

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

Business of Supply	
Opposition Motion—Pesticides	
Motion	1452
Ms. Bell (Vancouver Island North)	1452
Mr. Szabo	1453
Ms. Wasylucia-Leis	1454
Mr. Masse	1454
Mr. Szabo	1455
Ms. Wasylucia-Leis	1455
Mr. Fletcher	1456
Ms. Brown (Oakville)	1458
Mr. Dewar	1458
Mr. Szabo	1459
Ms. Priddy	1459
Mr. Szabo	1460
Mr. Bezan	1460

Mr. Dewar	1461
Mr. Allen	1462
Mr. Szabo	1462
Ms. Gagnon	1462
Mr. Julian	1465
Mr. Carrier	1465
Mr. Merrifield	1466
Mr. Julian	1467
Mr. Nadeau	1468
Mr. Dykstra	1468
Ms. Crowder	1469
Mr. Dhaliwal	1470
Ms. Crowder	1470
Mr. Silva	1471
Mr. Christopherson	1472
Mr. Julian	1472
Mr. Siksay	1473
Mr. Martin (Winnipeg Centre)	1474
Mr. Szabo	1474
Motion negatived on division	1476
Opposition Motion—Kyoto protocol	
Motion	1476
Motion agreed to	1478

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

Canada Post	
Mr. McKay	1478
Mr. Jean	1478
Veterans	
Mr. Thibault (West Nova)	1479
Mrs. Hinton	1480

MAIL  POSTE

Canada Post Corporation / Société canadienne des postes

Postage paid

Port payé

Lettermail

Poste-lettre

**1782711
Ottawa**

If undelivered, return COVER ONLY to:
Publishing and Depository Services
Public Works and Government Services Canada
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0S5

*En case de non-livraison,
retourner cette COUVERTURE SEULEMENT à :*
Les Éditions et Services de dépôt
Travaux publics et Services gouvernementaux Canada
Ottawa (Ontario) K1A 0S5

Published under the authority of the Speaker of the House of Commons

Publié en conformité de l'autorité du Président de la Chambre des communes

**Also available on the Parliament of Canada Web Site at the following address:
Aussi disponible sur le site Web du Parlement du Canada à l'adresse suivante :**
<http://www.parl.gc.ca>

The Speaker of the House hereby grants permission to reproduce this document, in whole or in part, for use in schools and for other purposes such as private study, research, criticism, review or newspaper summary. Any commercial or other use or reproduction of this publication requires the express prior written authorization of the Speaker of the House of Commons.

**Additional copies may be obtained from Publishing and Depository Services
Public Works and Government Services Canada
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0S5
Telephone: (613) 941-5995 or 1-800-635-7943
Fax: (613) 954-5779 or 1-800-565-7757
publications@pwgsc.gc.ca
<http://publications.gc.ca>**

Le Président de la Chambre des communes accorde, par la présente, l'autorisation de reproduire la totalité ou une partie de ce document à des fins éducatives et à des fins d'étude privée, de recherche, de critique, de compte rendu ou en vue d'en préparer un résumé de journal. Toute reproduction de ce document à des fins commerciales ou autres nécessite l'obtention au préalable d'une autorisation écrite du Président.

**On peut obtenir des copies supplémentaires ou la version française de cette publication en écrivant à : Les Éditions et Services de dépôt
Travaux publics et Services gouvernementaux Canada
Ottawa (Ontario) K1A 0S5
Téléphone : (613) 941-5995 ou 1-800-635-7943
Télécopieur : (613) 954-5779 ou 1-800-565-7757
publications@tpsgc.gc.ca
<http://publications.gc.ca>**