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OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Wednesday, May 6, 2009

—

Speaker: The Honourable Peter Milliken

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, May 6, 2009

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

• (1405)

[English]

The Speaker: It being Wednesday, we will now have the singing of the national anthem led by the hon. member for Brossard—La Prairie.

[Members sang the national anthem]

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

WORLD RED CROSS RED CRESCENT DAY

Mr. Dean Allison (Niagara West—Glanbrook, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honour of World Red Cross Red Crescent Day, and also to mark the centennial anniversary of the passing of the Canadian Red Cross Society Act. It was 100 years ago this month that an act of Parliament established the Canadian Red Cross to serve Canadians in accordance with the Geneva conventions.

For 100 years, Canadians have had their own national society focused on emergency response, first aid and water safety training, community health, family reunification, and other services here at home, as well as humanitarian aid around the world.

This government is proud to support the work of the Red Cross movement, from helping fight diseases like malaria in Africa and providing hurricane response in Haiti, to aiding civilians in regions of conflict like those in Sri Lanka and Afghanistan.

We pay tribute to the thousands of Red Cross volunteers and staff who are dedicated to helping those made vulnerable by disasters and other humanitarian tragedies.

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CHILD SOLDIERS

Hon. Anita Neville (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on April 25, an organization called Invisible Children hosted events to bring attention to one of the most neglected humanitarian emergencies in the world today, one where 30,000 children have been abducted to fight as child soldiers. For the past 23

years, the children of Uganda have been both victims and armed soldiers, forced into activities of rape, torture and murder.

International events took place in over 100 cities around the world to highlight the infamy in Uganda. At the Legislative Buildings in Winnipeg, over 150 young people from the Winnipeg area came out to add their voices in the hope of bringing attention to the defenceless children of Uganda. Individual refugees spoke to their own experiences as child soldiers.

I stand here today in this House to support the members of Invisible Children and to congratulate them on their successful event and their efforts to bring attention to what is happening in Uganda.

The Government of Canada must speak out and call for a change in Uganda.

* * *

[Translation]

ANGUS AUTOPARTS

Ms. France Bonsant (Compton—Stanstead, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I never tire of singing the praises of the businesses and entrepreneurs of my region, and rightly so, for the Eastern Townships abound with innovative businesses. One of them, Angus Autoparts, was recently honoured at the regional chamber of commerce's 23rd Reconnaissance Estrie gala with an award in the retail business category.

This company is located in East Angus, in the heart of my riding, and has been run by the Blais family for the last quarter century. In 2000, ownership of the family business passed to Isabelle Blais, the daughter of its founder, and she has taken it to new heights.

In accepting her award, Ms. Blais made a point of encouraging and congratulating all women who are entering non-traditional areas of entrepreneurship. Today it is my turn to congratulate her in the House.

Bravo to Isabelle Blais and all her team at Angus Autoparts.

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[English]

CANADIAN RED CROSS

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the Canadian Red Cross as it celebrates 100 years of service.

This organization is renowned for dealing with crucial issues to women in our society: health care, violence and sexual exploitation.

Statements by Members

I would like to highlight one project in particular, implemented by the Canadian Red Cross, called ENLACE, in Nicaragua. The project fills in health care coverage gaps, including family planning, immunization and pre- and post-natal care. The Red Cross works closely with women, volunteers and residents of isolated communities to improve their health care. The ENLACE project also works toward gender equality.

As the MP for northern Manitoba, a region with many women living in poverty, a lack of health care services and high rates of infant mortality, I recognize the need to heed the initiatives taken on by the Red Cross and strengthen such programs in first nations and rural communities in our north.

Congratulations to the Canadian Red Cross as it continues to provide important services here and abroad. One hundred years and counting.

* * *

JUSTICE

Mr. Brent Rathgeber (Edmonton—St. Albert, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last weekend in Edmonton, 14-year-old Cassandra Williams tragically passed away from an overdose of ecstasy. At a youth party at the West Edmonton Mall, she ingested 18 doses of this illegal drug. This shocked her tiny body so badly that her heart simply stopped beating.

Sadly, this tragedy was completely avoidable.

I would like to commend the hon. Minister of Justice for introducing Bill C-15, a bill which will keep criminals who deal drugs in public places frequented by young persons, such as the West Edmonton Mall, where they belong. In jail.

I encourage all members of the justice committee, on which I serve, to approve this bill expeditiously, and all members of this House to support this very important legislation, so that we can keep criminals, such as the one who sold Cassandra the lethal amount of ecstasy, where they belong. In prison.

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WORLD RED CROSS RED CRESCENT DAY

Mr. Glen Pearson (London North Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is World Red Cross Red Crescent Day. As a firefighter and a humanitarian worker in numerous countries around the world, I have had the good fortune to have worked with the Red Cross Red Crescent societies and have witnessed how their actions have saved more lives than any of us can count.

From their humble beginnings in 1863 in Italy, the organizations have grown to include 187 national societies, 300,000 staff and over 100 million volunteers worldwide. They are the largest humanitarian organizations in the world. They have greatly assisted Canada in our own efforts to make this world more humane and just.

I know I speak on behalf of all members in the House as we congratulate the Red Cross Red Crescent organizations on this very special day. I have seen them work. I have seen the lives they have saved. I have personally been made more compassionate by their service, as have we all.

• (1410)

MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS AWARENESS MONTH

Mr. Ted Menzies (MacLeod, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am proud and honoured to rise today in support of MS Awareness Month and to help kick off the annual MS Carnation Campaign, an initiative which over the years has raised over \$45 million to fund MS research and services.

Today, volunteers from the Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada, MPs representing each political party, and I have been pinning carnations on members of Parliament to help raise awareness of multiple sclerosis.

Canada has one of the highest rates of MS in the world. Between 55,000 and 75,000 Canadians have MS. Most often diagnosed between the ages of 15 and 40, it is a disease that affects the entire family and society as a whole.

The MS Society works to find a cure for multiple sclerosis and enables people affected by the disease to enhance their quality of life.

I encourage all members of the House and all Canadians to support the society's efforts to make a difference for people living with this disease. By working together, we will end MS.

* * *

[Translation]

ANNUAL PRESS FREEDOM AWARD

Mr. Serge Ménard (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, BQ): Investigative reporter Daniel Leblanc has been awarded the annual Press Freedom Award. This past Sunday was World Press Freedom Day.

The award, presented by the Canadian Committee for World Press Freedom, honours his remarkable determination to protect his confidential source, known as Ma Chouette, who enabled him to lift the veil of secrecy surrounding the sponsorship scandal and eventually led to the Gomery Inquiry. That same determined silence has led to his facing contempt of court charges, with a potential fine and a year in prison.

The *Globe and Mail* journalist took advantage of the awards ceremony to reiterate that a relationship of trust exists between him and his source and that no one can make him breach that confidence, since such sources are the very foundation of investigative journalism, which is of such great service to democracy.

I encourage everyone to sign the on-line petition on the Bloc site in support of this reporter, Daniel Leblanc, calling for him not to be sentenced for a criminal offence.

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[English]

SEAL HUNT

Mr. Gerald Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last night, in response to the European Parliament's vote against our seal hunt, our Conservative government called for a take-note debate, where we hoped all four political parties would be able to come together and discuss this important issue as one united voice.

Statements by Members

Unfortunately, Canada's Parliament is not one united voice. It turns out that a Liberal senator wrote a letter to every member of the European Parliament, encouraging them to vote against Canadian sealers.

Yesterday, anti-seal groups were even lauding the efforts of Liberal Mac Harb for his part in convincing the EU to vote against our sealers.

To add insult to injury, Liberal Mac Harb is now calling Canadians barbaric for supporting the seal hunt and is publicly saying Canada should not appeal to the WTO.

Canadians should know that this Conservative government will vigorously defend our seal hunt and our sealers.

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INTERNATIONAL AID

Hon. Carolyn Bennett (St. Paul's, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today, the Women for African Grandmothers generously gave each member of Parliament a symbolic friendship pin. This gift is a gentle reminder to keep the promises made five years ago to get affordable medicines to developing countries in need, the Jean Chrétien pledge to Africa.

[*Translation*]

It reminds us of our duty to contribute to the global fund to fight AIDS, TB and malaria.

[*English*]

However, since the adoption of the CAMR legislation, only one shipment has been produced and sent to Africa in the past five years.

There are already 13 million African children who have lost their parents to HIV-AIDS and this number continues to grow.

I am proud to recognize this important campaign and call for the political will needed to do everything possible to ensure that Canada can deliver on its pledge to Africa by getting life-saving drugs to those in need.

* * *

• (1415)

PORK INDUSTRY

Mr. Larry Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC): Mr. Speaker, many of us just came from a Canadian pork barbecue and enjoyed some top-notch, safe Canadian pork with hundreds of other parliamentarians and ambassadors from around the world.

I would like to thank the Canadian Pork Council and the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food for organizing the barbecue so everyone could see and taste our excellent and safe Canadian pork. I know the pork producers from my riding of Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound and those across Canada produce the safest pork in the world.

During the BSE crisis of 2003, borders were shut down for political reasons and not on the basis of science. We do not need the same thing happening to the pork industry. We do not need misleading information and fearmongering about the safe consumption of pork. The science is clear: Canadian pork is safe. Countries from around the world need to keep their borders open to pork.

We all need to show our support for the pork industry. Today, Canadians did just that.

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EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mr. Claude Gravelle (Nickel Belt, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I stand today for the 700 Xstrata workers who were laid off in Sudbury. They have been abandoned by the government before and now they are worried that they will be abandoned again.

With weeks left to work, many are looking at a very uncertain future. Will they have to sell their homes? Will they have to move away? Will the EI system they have been paying into be there for them when they need it? What does the future hold for them, for Sudbury and for communities across Canada?

They are concerned, and so far the government has offered no answers. I understand their concern. Employment insurance is broken and the government will not fix it. Jobs are few and far between and retraining is only part of the solution. Those Xstrata workers and communities like Sudbury need long-term solutions and an economic strategy to revitalize mining and build long-term sustainable growth.

Those Xstrata folks worked hard, they played by the rules and they deserve a helping hand. They deserve better from the government.

* * *

[*Translation*]

LIBERAL PARTY

Mrs. Shelly Glover (Saint Boniface, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal Party and taxation go hand in hand. The Liberal leader's penchant for disclosure in recent years reached new heights a few weeks ago when he said, "We will have to raise taxes."

We are now certain that the Liberal leader has revealed part of his fiscal agenda for the future.

Since we came to power more than three years ago, we have done everything we can to ease the Liberal tax burden on Canadians. Canadians suffocated under layer after layer after layer of taxes piled on by the Liberals during their too-long time in office in recent years. But we have cut taxes for all segments of society.

A Liberal government means red ink on our tax bills and higher taxes, red ink on our heating bills and higher heating costs, and red ink on our grocery bills and watching our savings vanish.

*Oral Questions***WORLD RED CROSS RED CRESCENT DAY**

Ms. Francine Lalonde (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Mr. Speaker, today, we in this House mark World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day. This organization, which is the largest humanitarian network in the world, with tens of millions of volunteers, was created by Henry Dunant. This year marks the 100th anniversary of the Canadian Red Cross and the 150th anniversary of the international movement.

The 2009 campaign, whose theme is “Our world. Your move.”, is intended to raise awareness of the challenges we all face, from armed conflict and mass displacement to climate change and the global economic crisis. The Red Cross and Red Crescent want to inspire people, as individuals, to make a move and do something to help others, because “All can, in one way or another, each in his own sphere and within his own limitations, do something to help the good work forward,” as Mr. Dunant said.

This is “a call for hope supported by action”.

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WORLD RED CROSS RED CRESCENT DAY

Mr. Marcel Proulx (Hull—Aylmer, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, has it really been 100 years already?

A century ago, the parliamentarians who came before us passed the legislation that established the Canadian Red Cross Society, which today also operates under the name of Red Crescent. The Red Cross was already active in Canada prior to that, but under the aegis of the British Red Cross.

I invite my colleagues to think about the countless Canadians who have benefited from the support, security and comfort provided by the Red Cross under the most difficult circumstances. We only need to skim through the newspaper to read about any number of disasters that our citizens face every day. The Red Cross might not always make the headlines, but there is an excellent chance that, in most cases, it is there.

If there is a need for clothing or temporary shelter for people forced out of their homes in the middle of the night because of fire or flood, the Red Cross is there.

On behalf of all my colleagues and all Canadians, I would like to express the profound gratitude we owe to all the staff and volunteers who work for the Red Cross and Red Crescent, and I hope they will continue to be there to provide relief for centuries to come.

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● (1420)

[English]

LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA

Mr. Earl Dreeshen (Red Deer, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our Conservative government is taking action during this global recession. With our economic action plan, we are reducing taxes on Canadian families, creating jobs and helping Canadians who are hardest hit by the global recession. We have a plan and that is what Canadians want in a government.

The Liberals have an agenda. It is a road map to economic failure. They want to increase the GST, end the universal child care benefit

and impose a job-killing carbon tax on Canadian families and businesses. Most disturbing of all is when the Liberal leader himself announced that he “will have to raise taxes”.

The Liberals' road map to economic failure is not the way to help Canadian families and not the way to help the economy. They are still hiding the details of their tax hikes from Canadians. Will the Liberal leader stand in the House and tell Canadians which taxes he will raise, by how much he will raise them and who will be forced to pay these higher taxes?

ORAL QUESTIONS

[Translation]

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mr. Michael Ignatieff (Leader of the Opposition, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there are 58 regional eligibility thresholds for employment insurance, but this country is facing a national crisis during which we need a single national eligibility threshold. We recommend that all regions of the country have a 360-hour threshold.

Does the government really intend to go on vacation this summer without having resolved employment insurance issues?

[English]

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I think it is very telling that in the run-up to the preparation for this year's budget we asked the Liberal Party and the Liberal leader for their ideas on what should be done to help Canadians who were going through layoffs in these challenging times. We received nothing in response, nothing from the Liberals.

The very first day after his coronation officially as leader of the Liberal Party, what did the new leader come forward with? An idea borrowed or stolen from the NDP.

Mr. Michael Ignatieff (Leader of the Opposition, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the members on the opposite side of the House seem to want us to do their job. We are asking them to do their job.

The minister likes to point out places where enough people are out of work that it has become a little easier for them to get EI. This means the government seems to think that the EI eligibility problem will solve itself as more people lose their jobs. What kind of a solution is that? How long will it take for the government to act on this file?

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC): Let us face it, Mr. Speaker, the last time action was taken on this file, prior to us improving it, was when the Liberals introduced the program in 1996, and they gutted it at all acknowledged sources.

We are cleaning up their mess. We have extended it. We have added an additional five weeks of regular benefits. As well, we have expanded it so people can actually not need EI. They can stay in their jobs through a work sharing program, which is now protecting 93,000 jobs right across the country.

Mr. Michael Ignatieff (Leader of the Opposition, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, a 360-hour national standard of eligibility will help Canadian families that have lost their jobs. It will provide immediate stimulus to the economy.

When the Minister of Finance said just last night that he was willing to consider our proposals on EI, was this for real or was it just a case of when the cat is away, the mice will play?

• (1425)

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we did ask the Liberals for their opinion several months ago. What did we receive? Zero. That is what we got from them in terms of looking for ways to help Canadians. We knew they were going to need help and we offered it to them.

We have provided substantial improvements in access to EI, in benefits for those who are unfortunate enough to lose their jobs. However, all the Liberals can come up with is borrowed ideas. That is their idea of leadership. We do not buy it.

[Translation]

Hon. Denis Coderre (Bourassa, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last Monday, the Minister of National Revenue shut out people in need. In response to the Liberal proposal to reduce the employment insurance eligibility requirement to 360 hours, the minister said, “We are not open to that idea”. Yesterday, however, when someone pointed out that the Minister of Finance's own wife, Christine Elliott, had warned him about this, he said that he was open to suggestions for improving the employment insurance program.

Canadians deserve better. Who speaks on behalf of the government, the National Revenue minister of bits and pieces or the Minister of Finance?

[English]

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, let me give a few quotes. “The five week extension of benefits is a step in the right direction” and “Retraining is an excellent way to diversify our labour force and grow the economy”, and those are two things we are doing. Who said that? The Liberal member for Cape Breton—Canso.

Who said this, “budget 2009 is strong on training?” It was the Liberal member for Markham—Unionville.

“The additional training will be beneficial for workers in those industries hardest hit, such as manufacturing and forestry, as they prepare for careers in other sectors”. Who said that? The member for Kings—Hants, a Liberal again.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. Everyone will want to hear the question.

[Translation]

We have another question. The hon. member for Bourassa.

Oral Questions

SPORT

Hon. Denis Coderre (Bourassa, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, people are not interested in quotations. They are interested in making ends meet. That is what is important.

On another note, I would like to wake up the Minister of State (Sport), who seems to be taking a nap over there.

Alex Harvey, one of our greatest cross-country skiing Olympic hopefuls, has been given the cold shoulder by Cross Country Canada because he chose to train alone for a while rather than train with the team in the United States. He was downgraded from the A squad to the B squad, and will receive between \$15,000 and \$20,000 less support to participate in the World Cup, a critical step toward participating in the Vancouver Games in front of a home crowd.

Will the minister make sure that Cross Country Canada reconsiders its decision and allows Alex Harvey to pursue his Olympic dream?

Enough with the power trip—

The Speaker: Order, please. The hon. Minister of State (Sport).

[English]

Hon. Gary Lunn (Minister of State (Sport), CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to report to the House that Cross Country Canada and Mr. Harvey are continuing discussions and we are very confident that there will be a very successful conclusion. I can tell members that we want the very best athletes from right across Canada representing us at the 2010 Olympics.

Speaking about the best, I am also pleased to report that last winter season, our athletes won 28 medals in world championships, placing Canada number one in the world.

[Translation]

Our government will continue to support Canadian Olympic and Paralympic athletes.

* * *

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Minister of State (Science and Technology) misled the House when he declared that he has invested \$5.1 billion in research and development. What the minister did not say is that a large portion of this money has been allocated to infrastructure and not to funding research per se.

The Obama administration is announcing a \$10 billion investment in research in the United States, at the same time that our government is announcing cuts.

Does the government realize that its attitude will only result in researchers heading south of the border?

Oral Questions

Hon. Tony Clement (Minister of Industry, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government understands that it is important to invest in our researchers and in infrastructure because university administrators have told us that it is important to have the infrastructure in order for researchers to innovate and make discoveries. That is our strategy. It is a national strategy that is successful.

• (1430)

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is successful all right. It has succeeded in sending 25 researchers to the United States so far.

As well, the Minister of State (Science and Technology) stated yesterday that Canada leads the G7 countries in the percentage of GDP spent on research and development. That is false: Canada is fifth and only invests 1.9% of its GDP.

Does the government realize that its stubborn refusal to give priority to scientific research, on creationist and ideological grounds, will have irreversible repercussions in this area?

[English]

Hon. Gary Goodyear (Minister of State (Science and Technology), CPC): Mr. Speaker, what the member fails to realize and refuses to quote is that the president of McGill University just yesterday said that we have attracted 900 researchers from around the world. This country is number one in the G7 with respect to basic discovery research as a percentage of GDP and the Bloc votes against it every time. The Bloc members vote against funding for their universities, their colleges, their scientists, but they would not raise taxes like the Liberals would.

[Translation]

Mr. Marc Lemay (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in spite of a very positive evaluation, the Lake Duparquet teaching and research station was refused funding because of the Conservatives' decision to eliminate support for regional research resources. This centre, established by the Université du Québec en Abitibi—Témiscamingue and the Université du Québec à Montréal has an international reputation in forest renewal.

Does the Minister of State (Science and Technology) realize that Abitibi—Témiscamingue will lose this research centre and nearly 30 top researchers because of his wrong-headed research policy?

[English]

Hon. Gary Goodyear (Minister of State (Science and Technology), CPC): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member should know that these decisions are made by independent peer review panels. These are experts in the field who choose specific projects for research funding.

This government chose to put \$5.1 billion toward science and technology. The Bloc members, all of them, voted against that. They voted against research funding at Université Laval. They voted against the Vanier Scholarships, which the Université de Montréal, McGill and Laval all share in. The Quebec Bloc voted against that.

[Translation]

Mr. Claude Guimond (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives' approach is jeopardizing the survival of scientific treasures located in the regions

such as the Mont Mégantic Observatory and the *Coriolis II*, the only university vessel conducting oceanographic research in Canada.

How can the Minister of State (Science and Technology) justify such an illogical decision as cutting funding for the *Coriolis II* just when the Arctic and oceanographic research are becoming major issues?

[English]

Hon. Gary Goodyear (Minister of State (Science and Technology), CPC): Mr. Speaker, once again, this government put \$87 million toward Arctic research. The Bloc voted against it.

I am pleased to see that the independent panel actually chose the research icebreaker, the *Amundsen*. Again, the Bloc voted against that research.

The Liberals have promised to raise taxes, but the question really is, when will the Bloc stand up and vote yes for the science and tech community?

* * *

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Hon. Jack Layton (Toronto—Danforth, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives have presided over 400,000 people being thrown out of work, including miners who are here on the Hill today. Some 400,000 people have been thrown out of work, but 60% of those people, when they try to get help from EI, cannot get it.

The government has already said that it is prepared to backstop the EI fund. These workers have paid into the EI fund year after year. Why is the government preventing so many of them from getting the help they need when their families need it?

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, maybe if I say it often enough the hon. member will actually understand. According to Statistics Canada, over 80% of those who are unfortunate enough to lose their jobs and have paid into EI can and do collect.

Here is the thing: while we have been trying to help these people, while we have been trying to give them extra hours of regular benefits, while we have been trying to keep them in work through work sharing, every single effort we have made in that regard has been denied them by the NDP. The NDP members voted against every single move. They should be ashamed.

• (1435)

Hon. Jack Layton (Toronto—Danforth, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the people know what the truth is about unemployment, and that is that the Conservatives have abandoned the unemployed. That is the truth.

We are not alone in making these points. Even a prominent Conservative, someone rather close to the federal government we understand, Conservative MPP Christine Elliott, agrees that changes need to be made.

Oral Questions

The statistics are very clear. Every dollar spent on EI produces \$1.60 in benefit in the economy. Is there a better rate of return on any element of the government stimulus? The answer is no.

Why are the Conservatives standing in the way of helping the unemployed and helping—

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development.

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the one who is standing in the way is the leader of the NDP and his party.

What did those members vote against? They voted against five extra weeks for those unfortunate enough to lose their jobs. They voted against increasing the maximum number of weeks of eligibility to 50. Shame. They voted against expanding work sharing to 50 weeks. They voted against expanding the targeted initiative for older workers. They voted against all these things.

They are voting against the unemployed. We are standing up for the unemployed and we are delivering.

Hon. Jack Layton (Toronto—Danforth, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we will see whether the government votes for the NDP bill to change the qualifying hours to 360, which will be up for debate tomorrow.

[Translation]

I cannot understand why the Conservatives are so relentless when it comes to this issue. Sixty per cent of people who lose their jobs do not qualify. Not of those who contribute, but of those who lose their jobs. That is a fact.

There is consensus to reduce the number of hours required to 360. The only thing getting in the way is the Conservative Party. Why will they not change their minds and help the unemployed?

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, why is the hon. member refusing to help the unemployed? Why did he and his party vote against every proposal we made to help the unemployed? Why did he vote against five extra weeks? Why did he vote against work sharing? Why does he always vote against the unemployed? They deserve better.

* * *

[English]

TRADE

Hon. Bob Rae (Toronto Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, at Camp Pendleton in California, they are tearing out pipes made by IPEX, a company in Mississauga, for one simple reason. Those pipes contain the words “made in Canada”.

The government sat on its back and was not able to respond to the crisis in Congress and the crisis that is now affecting us with respect to the buy America provisions. I ask the minister, what is the government going to do to make sure that Canadian companies are not locked out of the American market which is so critical to our export industry?

Mr. Gerald Keddy (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, CPC): Mr. Speaker—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order, order. The hon. member has the floor for a response. The member for Toronto Centre wants to be able to hear the answer.

Mr. Gerald Keddy: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of International Trade continues to work with his American counterpart to make sure that Canadian companies have access to American contracts, especially on infrastructure. We will continue to represent Canada's interests. We will continue to make sure that American companies abide by the rules under NAFTA and abide by the rules under the WTO.

Hon. Bob Rae (Toronto Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have the passage of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. The U.S. Senate is considering the Water Quality Investment Act and there are five more pieces of legislation that are currently in front of Congress, all of which contain buy America provisions, all of which discriminate against Canadian companies.

Canadian manufacturers across the country are affected. It is estimated that as many as \$10 billion in exports can be lost because of these provisions. What is the government doing to protect the interests of Canadian companies and Canadian workers?

● (1440)

Mr. Gerald Keddy (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, CPC): Again, Mr. Speaker, I can only tell the hon. member that the Minister of International Trade has his hands on this file. He continues to advance Canadian interests in the United States. We will continue to protect Canadian interests on the infrastructure projects in the U.S.

We realize the Americans are a tough trading partner. That is why it is a priority file, and the minister treats it as a priority file. We will continue to ensure that the Americans abide by the rules under NAFTA and under WTO.

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EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Hon. Ken Dryden (York Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in a recession it is harder to keep a job and it takes longer to get one. In a recession, Woodstock, Ontario is no better off than Bridgewater, Nova Scotia or Red Deer, Alberta. Recession is an equal opportunity unemployed.

When will the minister create a national 360 standard?

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am continuously amazed that the Liberals stand up and shoot down the program that they designed. They actually said once that it was not designed for hard times. Well, that is what an EI system needs to do. That is why we improved it. That is why we are providing extra benefit weeks, because we had to improve on their system. But what do we get? While we are increasing benefits and increasing access for the unemployed, all the Liberals want to do is increase rhetoric and taxes.

Oral Questions

Hon. Ken Dryden (York Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that is not the point. It is not what the government does, it is what the dimensions of the problem require it to do. Over 400,000 more Canadians are unemployed.

The government is stuck with its own bad lines, “We are doing this, doing that”. It is not about what it finds convenient to do, it is what needs to be done.

As distasteful as the Prime Minister finds government action, as distasteful as he finds EI, it is not about him. It is about all Canadians. When will the government create a national 360 standard?

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals were in government for 13 years. They designed the last EI system. They had every opportunity to bring in a national 360 system. They actually got rid of a very similar system. That was their choice. Now they are switching it around.

All we get from them is increased rhetoric and increased taxes. We are increasing benefits. We are increasing access.

* * *

[Translation]

SEAL HUNT

Mr. Raynald Blais (Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the European Union's decision to ban the sale and import of all seal products in the 27 member countries as of 2010 will have a devastating effect on everyone in the Magdalen Islands. Everyone agrees that we have to exert more pressure and raise awareness to counter all of the false information surrounding this well-managed hunt.

Will the government invest more money in a campaign to promote seal products?

[English]

Hon. Gail Shea (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this government condemns the EU ban on Canadian seal products. Securing markets for Canadian seal products is a priority and will continue to be a priority for this government.

I can assure the member that we will stand up and fight for sealers.

[Translation]

Mr. Raynald Blais (Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, BQ): Mr. Speaker, if the government wants to take concrete action, it should take advantage of the forum provided by the 2010 Olympic Games in Vancouver to promote seal products, perhaps by using them in Canadian Olympic athletes' uniforms.

Will the government take that kind of concrete action to save the industry that many families in my riding depend on?

[English]

Hon. Gail Shea (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I do recognize that this is a big issue for the hon. member, particularly because the Magdalen Islands are big for sealers.

I welcome any suggestions that my colleague might have to help the Canadian sealing industry. Maybe he could share them with the Liberal Party.

* * *

[Translation]

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mr. Yves Lessard (Chambly—Borduas, BQ): Mr. Speaker, first the Liberals killed employment insurance, and now they are passing themselves off as its saviours and calling for a program review. It is not just a review that is required, however, but a total reform tailored to the crisis we are in at present.

The government is content with a program that no longer meets the needs of the unemployed. Why is it refusing to improve the program as the Bloc proposes, by doing away with the waiting period, reducing the eligibility level to 360 hours for everyone, and raising benefit levels from 55% to 66%?

● (1445)

Hon. Jean-Pierre Blackburn (Minister of National Revenue and Minister of State (Agriculture), CPC): Mr. Speaker, I do not know why the hon. member voted against our proposal. When we proposed improvements in our economic action plan this past January, these included a number of things to stimulate the economy and help workers. In particular, we proposed five extra weeks of employment insurance benefits. Yet, if people are entitled to 30 weeks of benefits but they start two weeks earlier, nothing is gained. They still get 30 weeks of benefits, but we are adding on five more.

Why did the Bloc vote against the workers? Why did it vote against this proposal?

Mrs. Josée Beaudin (Saint-Lambert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, among the Bloc Québécois proposals is one that could be implemented immediately: abolition of the waiting period. Adding the five additional weeks was necessary, but not enough in itself. In the present crisis situation, processing is taking longer, up to 60 days in some cases.

Rather than seeing each unemployed person as a potential cheater, why does the government not adopt a good faith approach, as is used for income tax, which would unplug the system and, along with abolition of the waiting period, give people quicker access to benefits?

Hon. Jean-Pierre Blackburn (Minister of National Revenue and Minister of State (Agriculture), CPC): Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member must not be listening, because we are giving her answers.

What have we done to help workers and stimulate the economy? On the one hand, added five more weeks of employment insurance benefits. On the other, added 14 weeks to job-sharing, taking it from 38 weeks to 52 weeks. What is more, people who lose their jobs and want to take training, or retrain in something new, can do so and be paid while they are learning. Those are three things we have done to help workers out.

*Oral Questions***MINISTER OF TRANSPORT, INFRASTRUCTURE AND COMMUNITIES**

Ms. Martha Hall Findlay (Willowdale, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, yesterday I asked the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities why he was still refusing to appear once more before the Standing Committee on Governmental Operations and Estimates. Unfortunately, he would not give a serious answer.

He knows that we will ask some difficult questions, but I also know that he is very capable of answering them.

I would like to ask him once again if he will keep his promise to appear before the committee to discuss the stimulus measures.

[English]

Hon. Rob Merrifield (Minister of State (Transport), CPC): Mr. Speaker, the minister has actually made himself available to committees for six and a half hours just in this last session of Parliament. He has another hour today, which will make it seven and a half hours. That is a significant amount of time. He has been at the transport committee a couple of times and at the government operations and estimates committee. He makes himself available all the time.

I do not know what my hon. colleague is talking about. The minister is available at request and he has never fudged on an opportunity to deal with committees.

Ms. Martha Hall Findlay (Willowdale, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will remind the House and the government that the particular minister, after saying yes, then refused. The reason the minister's office gave for his specific refusal was that to appear would be "damaging".

I asked him yesterday to explain how is appearance could be "damaging" and to whom. He certainly cannot be afraid of me or of the other members of the committee. We are very thorough but we are also very nice. What exactly is he afraid of?

Hon. Rob Merrifield (Minister of State (Transport), CPC): Mr. Speaker, I can tell you exactly what we are afraid of. We are afraid of them having the opportunity some day, heaven forbid, to raise taxes instead of create jobs. We are running across this country creating jobs and they are wanting to kill jobs by raising taxes, which will destroy the future of Canadians. Canadians are not too impressed with that.

* * *

AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

Mr. Francis Valeriote (Guelph, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the finance minister keeps saying that the yet to be seen secured credit facility will help auto industry sales.

We are on the edge of too little too late for this facility. Experts say that the BDC is ill-equipped to implement the leasing and loan facility. The government's stonewalling on the credit facility is hurting Canadians who cannot get a loan or a lease for a car, which is killing the auto industry, the very industry that now owes Canadians billions in loans.

The minister has failed to get the job done. Where is the credit facility that he promised for May 1.

• (1450)

Hon. Tony Clement (Minister of Industry, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to say a few words about the BDC. It has conducted an extensive consultation with the public and the stakeholders to ensure this credit facility is the right credit facility available to the right people at the right time. It has acquired the experts necessary to ensure this is a success and so the project is going forward.

What will hurt Canada more than anything we would ever contemplate is the Liberal plan to raise taxes. The Leader of the Opposition, on April 14, said, "We will have to raise taxes". That is always the Liberal approach. Whenever there is trouble on the horizon, it immediately clings to raising taxes. That will hurt our economy. It is not in our plans.

Mrs. Bonnie Crombie (Mississauga—Streetsville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, not only do the Conservatives avoid answering questions about the secured credit facility but we now know it is unlikely that Chrysler will ever be able to pay back the billions of dollars in taxpayer loans to the industry.

It is obvious the government has no plan and Canadians and the auto industry are suffering the consequences. Billions of dollars in unprotected loans are at risk of never being paid back.

Without this credit facility, what hope does the industry have of turning itself around and start paying back billions in taxpayer loans?

Hon. Tony Clement (Minister of Industry, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there is never any guarantee. However, we have taken a first priority on the loans that we have secured on the Chrysler loan package and, of course, we have equity where we have the right to sell to the eventual buyer, Fiat. We have protected taxpayers and that is what our government was elected to do.

What will not protect taxpayers is the Liberal plan to hike taxes. That is its plan for the economy and its plan for the auto sector. That is why the Liberals are a menace to the auto sector and why we are helping the auto sector by keeping taxes low and ensuring we have the economy that we want.

* * *

STATUS OF WOMEN

Mrs. Kelly Block (Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, two weeks ago, the Ontario minister of labour heard about the Liberal member for Brampton—Springdale's household paying live-in caregivers less than the minimum wage, confiscating their passports and forcing them to perform humiliating tasks not in their employment contract.

Oral Questions

These are serious accusations. The Ontario minister of labour has admitted that he has been sitting on these allegations for two weeks, essentially protecting his federal Liberal cousins.

Will the Minister of State for Status of Women tell the House what options are available to these female caregivers and others facing abuse?

Hon. Helena Guergis (Minister of State (Status of Women), CPC): Mr. Speaker, the same labour standards protect all workers in Canada, whether they are foreign-born caregivers or not. If these caregivers were paid less than the Ontario minimum wage and provincial labour laws were violated, I do hope the Ontario labour minister applies provincial labour laws consistently and does not give the federal Liberals any special treatment.

For far too long, women, in particular immigrant women, have been victims. They have been afraid to fight back. Our message to them is simple: They do have rights and it does not matter who they are up against. Even if it is a member of Parliament, the government will protect them.

* * *

CANADIAN FORCES

Mr. Jack Harris (St. John's East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the government has never met a job or an industry that it did not want to outsource or privatize, but when it comes to the safety of our dedicated men and women in Afghanistan, one would think it would draw the line. Apparently not.

The government is employing private security companies and hiring cheap labour to protect our bases. Is this the best we can do to protect our soldiers? There is something wrong with this mission if we cannot protect our military bases with our own troops.

Does the Minister of Defence honestly believe that this is the best way to keep our brave men and women safe?

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of National Defence and Minister for the Atlantic Gateway, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I could not disagree with the hon. member more. There are no better soldiers in the world than the Canadian Forces.

If he is talking in some vague fashion about using private security contractors in the mission, which all countries are doing, which NATO countries are doing, hiring Afghans, we are working with Afghans to build their security capacity. We are working with operational mentoring liaison teams in both police and army to build their ability to secure their own country. That is exactly what we will continue to do.

Mr. Jack Harris (St. John's East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, that is not good enough for the safety of our troops.

The Bush administration's use of private security contractors in Iraq led to abuses that were severely criticized. The people we have hired here are outside the military chain of command and not subject to our military laws, discipline or justice.

Why is the government using these private companies as cheap labour in the first place? Will the government commit to stop using private security contracts to protect our bases or to carry out military or paramilitary operations in Afghanistan?

• (1455)

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of National Defence and Minister for the Atlantic Gateway, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I know the member is new to the file but he really should delve into the details of this issue a little further.

Using private security contractors is what all countries have been doing. This is what allows us to help train Afghans to do the type of work that we are doing now. In fact, Canada has been a leader, with other countries, working on the International Committee of the Red Cross to finalize the Montreux document on private and military security companies.

This demonstrates our country's commitment to identify and promote good practices regarding operations of private military security companies. This is exactly what we are there to do, which is to help them do the jobs we do.

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[Translation]

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Mr. Thierry St-Cyr (Jeanne-Le Ber, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism is hiding behind the IRB to justify the partisan appointment of Pharès Pierre. Yet before the committee, the Auditor General said, "The decision whether or not to appoint a candidate is always the prerogative of the minister and the governor in council."

The minister therefore could have rejected, and still could reject, this shameful appointment. Pharès Pierre's swearing in is set for June 2. Will the minister take action, assume his responsibilities and remove Pharès Pierre?

Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I have said in the past, the chair of the IRB recommended the man in question to the government for an IRB appointment following a screening process. When I learned that that individual had prior questionable ties with Haitian authorities, I expressed my concerns. The appointment was made based on the recommendation of the IRB, which is an independent tribunal. I spoke to the IRB chair about this matter and it is up to him to oversee the board members.

Mr. Thierry St-Cyr (Jeanne-Le Ber, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the minister still refuses to act and continues to defend this partisan appointment, claiming that he cannot do anything about it. Yet sections 153(1) (a) and 186 of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act clearly indicate that the governor in council can remove a member of the board.

Will the minister admit that he is refusing to assume his responsibilities simply because he wants to continue to protect a Conservative crony?

Oral Questions

Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I reject the question, the suggestion and this interpretation. I do not know that individual. To the best of my knowledge, he was not involved in the Conservative Party. He was proposed as a candidate recommended by the IRB after a screening process. Following the appointment of members to the IRB, it is up to the chair of the IRB to oversee the members and their behaviour. That is the chair's responsibility. He is a very professional man and I have complete confidence in the chair of the IRB in this file.

* * *

[English]

AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the minister may be able to serve barbecued pork, but his responsibility as minister is to ensure that Canadian pork producers themselves are not barbecued.

First there was the United States' country of origin labelling and now there are illegal pork bans driving Canadian farmers into financial ruin. Yet the only thing this minister has delivered to date is additional debt. I ask the minister to send a message to the world, and not just threaten trade action but stand up for producers and deliver for once.

Will the minister commit today to cash payments to Canadian hog producers so that they can have some financial security?

Hon. Gerry Ritz (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, pork producers as well as the rest of the farmers across this great country know that we will develop programs and be there for them in their need. We continue to open trade routes for them. We continue to maintain the great trade they have with certain countries. I understand the Philippines are reassessing their position. We are hoping for some very positive news there.

What would really barbecue farmers quickly is increasing their taxes, and a punitive carbon tax would have an exponentially harmful effect on agriculture. We will never do that.

● (1500)

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I plead with the minister to reconsider and deliver cash.

However, let me turn to another area of increasingly proven ministerial incompetence. The documents that the minister provided to the Subcommittee on Food Safety confirm that the minister never received a full briefing on the listeriosis crisis until August 24, weeks after the crisis began and with deaths mounting.

Was it the minister's concern over the political fallout that caused the delay, or interference by the PMO, or both? Delays could have increased the health risk. Why the delay?

Hon. Gerry Ritz (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, everyone knows the timeline involved. The member opposite has been working with that at committee. Several different studies are being done. We look forward to those reports, including the independent investigation by Ms. Sheila Weatherill. I think it is

going to be very enlightening when that comes out in July. We look forward that.

Of course, the timeline could be looked at 100 different ways. I can assure the member that I was involved. CFIA made the recall in the early morning hours on the 17th, and I was notified at the beginning of business on the 18th. We began to take action. We will continue to do that to build a better food safety system in this great country.

* * *

MINING INDUSTRY

Mr. Claude Gravelle (Nickel Belt, NDP): Mr. Speaker, last February, workers at Xstrata got a double shock, and today they are on the Hill. The first shock was when 700 workers were laid off in violation of the agreement between Xstrata and the government; and the second was when the government did nothing to enforce that agreement. It took the hard work of the CAW local to negotiate a delay of these layoffs, but now that time is almost up.

Workers and families feel abandoned by the Conservative government. Will the government realize that its inaction is causing the demise of mining communities like Sudbury, right across northern Ontario?

Hon. Tony Clement (Minister of Industry, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is quite the opposite. At the time of the original decision by Xstrata, we announced that Xstrata would in fact commit to contractual terms on investment of up to \$390 million in Sudbury for their mining operations. It was not just something that was in a brochure or in an annual report. We committed them to contractual terms.

That is the kind of work we do. We work with a company, if it is so willing, and find the best deal possible to protect the workers and the communities. That is what we do on this side of the House. They do not do it on that side of the House.

Mr. Glenn Thibeault (Sudbury, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today 50 CAW mine mill workers from Xstrata have travelled from Sudbury to talk to the Minister of Industry. These miners feel abandoned by the Conservatives. It was the union, not the government, that got Xstrata to delay the layoffs.

The government chose instead to side with corporate interests and just sat on its hands. Now the workers' deal is set to expire and they are worried about their future. Will this minister commit today to working with these miners and finally commit to rebuilding the mining sector in northern Ontario?

Hon. Tony Clement (Minister of Industry, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member may be aware, we have a number of programs that are going to be helpful to Sudbury. They are delivered through FedNor. They are delivered through our community adjustment fund.

Routine Proceedings

We are there for the people of Sudbury. I have had numerous meetings with the Mayor of Sudbury to make sure their plans for their community are brought through our system in an appropriate manner. That is what we are doing on this side of the House.

I wonder if the union members are aware that many members of his caucus in fact voted for the continuation of the long gun registry, voted for the immediate removal of the plans to have that done.

That is on their side of the House. They have to answer to their constituents on that.

* * *

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Ms. Lois Brown (Newmarket—Aurora, CPC): Mr. Speaker, nannygate is not just about the member for Brampton—Springdale, it is about the Liberal Party. It is about a culture of arrogance and entitlement that treats women, immigrant women in particular, like chattel.

Not one Liberal has come out and stood up for these abused nannies. The Liberal Party is failing immigrant women, not just by taking them for granted but by being silent when they are being abused.

Where are the Liberal voices standing up for these abused caregivers?

Will the Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism tell the House what the government is doing to protect immigrant women?

Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I said on this matter yesterday, we are concerned about any allegation of the abuse of the rights of live-in caregivers or women more generally. I pointed to various avenues.

I encourage women in these vulnerable situations to understand that their rights can and will be protected under Canadian law. I would refer them, for instance, to section 124 of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, which says that every person who employs a foreign national in a capacity in which the foreign national is not authorized under the act to be employed could be found guilty of an indictment with a penalty of up to \$50,000 or two years in jail, or both.

These are very serious matters.

* * *

•(1505)

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Ms. Siobhan Coady (St. John's South—Mount Pearl, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, President Obama remarked last week on the global outbreak of the flu:

[I]f there was ever a day that reminded us of our...stake in science and research, it's today.

While President Obama recognizes the value of the American scientific community, the Conservatives cut operational funding. Two thousand Canadian scientists have written that the cuts are detrimental.

President Obama understands the value of science and research. The Liberals understand. The scientists understand.

How come everyone understands except the Prime Minister?

Hon. Gary Goodyear (Minister of State (Science and Technology), CPC): Mr. Speaker, I welcome the Americans' recommitment to science and technology. In fact, I met with our American counterparts last Friday, who are very impressed with what Canada is doing.

No country in the G7 provides more money than Canada does with respect to basic discovery research. I can tell the House that the Liberals cut \$442 million out of science and technology.

Our approach is different. We are putting \$5.1 billion in, and on a per capita basis, that is better than most other countries, including the United States.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

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

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•(1510)

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Mr. David Tilson (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, a report of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration, entitled "Temporary Foreign Workers and Non-Status Workers".

At this time I would like to acknowledge all the present members and the past members of the former 39th Parliament who sat on this committee, who travelled the country, met Canadians, and did a great deal of work in helping us put this report together.

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Mr. Rodney Weston (Saint John, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the fourth report of the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans in relation to the European legislative actions regarding the Canadian seal harvest.

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AIR CANADA PUBLIC PARTICIPATION ACT

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-379, An Act to amend the Air Canada Public Participation Act.

Routine Proceedings

He said: Mr. Speaker, I thank my seconder, the member for Vancouver East. She supports this bill, as well. The bill calls for an operational and overhaul centre for Air Canada to be continued and maintained in Vancouver, British Columbia. So the member of Parliament for Vancouver East is standing up, as she always does, for people of the Lower Mainland of British Columbia.

When the Air Canada Public Participation Act was put into effect, it called for the corporation, Air Canada, to maintain operational and overhaul centres in the city of Winnipeg, the Montreal urban community and the city of Mississauga, but it did not include the city of Vancouver. As a result, the Lower Mainland has seen a hemorrhaging of jobs in the operational sector, in overhaul centres. A wide variety of jobs have been cut back. We believe Air Canada should be maintaining those jobs on the west coast of Canada. It should be maintaining those jobs in the Lower Mainland. It has an impact not just in the Richmond, Vancouver and Burnaby—New Westminster areas, but of course, right through the Lower Mainland. There are small businesses that depend on the dollars that are brought in through the provision of those jobs in operations and in overhaul.

For those reasons, the NDP is supporting this amendment to change the Air Canada Public Participation Act and to oblige Air Canada to maintain those facilities in the city of Vancouver and the Lower Mainland of British Columbia.

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

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CRIMINAL CODE

Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskij (Etobicoke Centre, Lib.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-380, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (hate propaganda).

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table my private member's bill, an act to amend the Criminal Code regarding hate propaganda.

The bill seeks to expand the definition of "identifiable group" under hate propaganda provisions of the Criminal Code to include any section of the public distinguished by gender.

Currently the law states that it is prohibited to propagate hate against an individual because of colour, race, religion, ethnic origin or sexual orientation. However, it is not against the law to propagate hate against individuals because of their gender.

By enacting this important improvement to the Criminal Code, Parliament can begin to address the serious issue of promoting hatred and violence against women or men.

This amendment should have been made long ago. It is my sincere hope that my colleagues on all sides of this House will support this long overdue initiative.

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

The Speaker: There seems to be a discussion going on at the far end of the chamber, which is creating a lot of noise. I would urge hon. members to carry on their discussions in the lobby. It is available, and I am sure they will find it much easier to chat there rather than yelling across the House here.

●(1515)

INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT

Hon. Jay Hill (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there have been discussions among all the parties, and I think you will find consent for the following motion. I move:

That this House recognizes the centennial of the establishment of The Canadian Red Cross Society and that Members of the House acknowledge the humanitarian work done in Canada and around the world by the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

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COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE**HEALTH**

Hon. Gordon O'Connor (Minister of State and Chief Government Whip, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there have been negotiations among the parties, and I believe you will find consent for the following travel motions. I move:

That, in relation to its study of health facilities in Nunavut, 12 members of the Standing Committee on Health be authorized to travel to Iqaluit and Rankin Inlet, Nunavut, from May 24 to 26, 2009 and that the necessary staff accompany the Committee.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

Hon. Gordon O'Connor (Minister of State and Chief Government Whip, CPC): I move:

That, in order to attend the Conference of the Canadian Council of Public Accounts Committees, 11 members of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts be authorized to travel to Edmonton, Alberta, in September 2009 and that the necessary staff accompany the Committee.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Routine Proceedings

(Motion agreed to)

VETERANS AFFAIRS

Hon. Gordon O'Connor (Minister of State and Chief Government Whip, CPC): I move:

That, in relation to its study on the comparison of veterans services offered by members of the Commonwealth and the G8, 12 members of the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs be authorized to travel to Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, in May-June 2009 and that the necessary staff accompany the Committee.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

FINANCE

Hon. Gordon O'Connor (Minister of State and Chief Government Whip, CPC): I move:

That, in relation to its study on measures to enhance credit availability and the stability of the Canadian financial systems, 12 members of the Standing Committee on Finance be authorized to travel to Washington, District of Columbia, from June 3 to 5, 2009 and that the necessary staff accompany the Committee.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

Hon. Gordon O'Connor (Minister of State and Chief Government Whip, CPC): I move:

That, in relation to its study on country of origin labelling, 12 members of the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food be authorized to travel to Washington, District of Columbia, from June 3 to 5, 2009 and that the necessary staff accompany the Committee.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Hon. Gordon O'Connor (Minister of State and Chief Government Whip, CPC): I move:

That, in relation to its study on Canada-South America Trade Relations, six members of the Standing Committee on International Trade be authorized to travel to Lima, Peru, in June 2009, and that the necessary staff accompany the Committee.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

Hon. Gordon O'Connor (Minister of State and Chief Government Whip, CPC): I move:

That, in relation to its study on Canada-South America Trade Relations, six members of the Standing Committee on International Trade be authorized to travel to Brasilia, Brazil; from June 8 to 12, 2009 and that the necessary staff accompany the Committee.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

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[*Translation*]

PROMOTING SEAL PRODUCTS

Mr. Raynald Blais (Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I also seek the unanimous consent of the House to adopt the following motion:

That, in the opinion of the House, the government should take advantage of the opportunity provided by the 2010 Vancouver Olympic Games to promote seal products, particularly by studying the possibility of using these products in the making of Canadian Olympic clothing.

The Speaker: Does the hon. member for Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine have the unanimous consent of the House to move this motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

* * *

PETITIONS

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Ms. Francine Lalonde (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present to this House 140 petitions from across Quebec. These petitions, initiated by the Association québécoise des organismes de coopération internationale, or AQOCI, are calling on the Prime Minister of Canada to bring pressure to bear internationally in order to establish fair and equitable trading rules, to support the principle of food sovereignty, to increase resources and promote peasant agriculture in Canada's developmental assistance program, to increase Canadian aid and quickly announce a schedule to gradually increase the amount of Canadian aid to 0.7% of gross national income by 2015.

• (1520)

[English]

SRI LANKA

Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as you are well aware, there is an increasing and very disturbing conflict going on in Sri Lanka. These constituents, residents of Canada, are very concerned about that conflict.

The petitioners call upon the government to demand that the government of Sri Lanka immediately initiate a ceasefire. The petitioners also call upon the government to request that the United Nations negotiate a permanent cessation of hostilities and provide immediate humanitarian relief. The petitioners also demand that the government of Sri Lanka provide full and free access to the conflict zone by non-governmental organizations and international media.

I have four of these petitions, which I have the honour to present on behalf of these very concerned Canadians.

OPPOSITION COALITION

Mr. Leon Benoit (Vegreville—Wainwright, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to present a petition wherein the petitioners note that on October 14, 2008, Canadian voters provided the Conservative Party with a clear and strengthened mandate to lead Canada through the current economic crisis.

The petitioners note that the opposition was looking to impose an unstable, unelected Liberal-NDP-separatist coalition. During the said election, they promised that in fact they would not do that.

These Canadians note that they, as voters, have the democratic right to choose who will govern them and not have a surprise prime minister chosen through an unseemly, undemocratic backroom deal.

SRI LANKA

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have four petitions that I would like to present to the House today.

The first petition calls attention to the situation in Sri Lanka. The petitioners note that the lives of 200,000 to 250,000 Tamils currently in the combat zone are at risk.

Routine Proceedings

The petitioners call upon the Government of Canada to use every diplomatic means possible to call for a ceasefire, and to work with the international community to ensure the government of Sri Lanka stops its military attacks so the civilian population can be moved out.

The petitioners also want to make sure there is a strong UN position to end the violence.

• (1525)

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the second petition I wish to present contains hundreds of signatures, and it relates to the crisis in employment insurance.

The petitioners call upon the Parliament of Canada to deal with the crisis affecting many industries, including the auto industry in my riding.

The petitioners are asking the Government of Canada for a qualification requirement of 360 hours for EI benefits in all regions of Canada; an increase in benefit duration to at least 50 weeks in all regions; elimination of the two-week waiting period; benefits that are at least 60% of normal earnings; use of the 12 best weeks of employment and suspension of the allocation of severance pay. The petitioners are also suggesting more flexible and innovative use of EI work sharing to keep people at work.

The present economy is costing these petitioners so much.

ORGAN HARVESTING IN CHINA

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): My next petition, Mr. Speaker, relates to the issue of Falun Gong practitioners and organ harvesting. The petitioners are protesting the fact that the Chinese government is targeting these individuals.

The petitioners are calling upon the Government of Canada to have a stronger presence to ensure these individuals will be protected.

The petitioners are calling on the Canadian government to help stop the atrocities, by condemning the Communist regime for committing these crimes against humanity; urging the Chinese regime to end the persecution of Falun Gong practitioners and releasing all Falun Gong practitioners immediately; taking active measures to help stop the mass killing and organ harvesting of Falun Gong participants; and discouraging Canadians from travelling to China for organ transplants.

PENSIONS

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the last petition I wish to present today is signed by thousands of Canadians, and it relates to Canadian pension funds. Drastic things are happening right now with respect to the economy, and Canadians are at risk.

The petitioners call upon the Parliament of Canada to protect workers' pension funds by extending to employee pension obligations super-priority preferred creditor protection in cases of bankruptcy or court mandated corporate restructuring.

Routine Proceedings

The petitioners urge the government to establish a pension guarantee agency equivalent in operation to the institutes that exist in the United States of America at the federal level.

By the volume of signatures, you can see that Canadians are concerned about their protection and they want the government to act.

ENERGY INDUSTRY

Hon. Dan McTeague (Pickering—Scarborough East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition signed by well over 120 Canadians from Mississauga, Aurora, Oshawa, Peterborough, Stayner, Whitby, Oakville, Richmond Hill, Guelph, Wasaga Beach and Prince George, B.C.

The petitioners wish to bring to the attention of the government the serious lack of competition and transparency in the energy industry that has hampered the free market to the detriment of all Canadians, and of course the wider impact of high fuel prices on the economy as a whole.

They wish to underline that during a period of economic uncertainty and difficulty the effect this has had on the Canadian economy cannot be ignored. They also wish to draw to the attention of the government and the House of Commons that many countries around the world, indeed most leading countries, have an energy market monitoring agency and that an energy superpower like Canada needs such an agency.

They therefore call upon the government to acknowledge that the high price of fuel is damaging the Canadian economy; to reinstate the office of petroleum price information, which was abolished by the Conservative government as an energy market information service in 2006, and that like the U.S. energy information agency would produce weekly reports, including all Canadian energy supply, demand, inventory and storage information; to begin hearings immediately into the energy sector to determine how the government can foster competition and provide transparency to the energy market; and to eliminate the monopolistic efficiencies defence clause of the Competition Act.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Rob Anders (Calgary West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I stand today to present petitions and call for tougher penalties for sexual offenders. Current penalties for sexual offenders do not reflect the severity of the crime and subsequent life-altering consequences suffered by victims.

Therefore, sexual offenders must receive a minimum of 10 years' jail time with no parole; they must attend rehabilitation; and the public needs to be notified upon release of a sexual offender.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Ms. Jean Crowder (Nanaimo—Cowichan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am presenting thousands of signatures on a petition called "united for peace". Many Canadians have generously supported peace-building efforts in Canada and around the world. As these efforts continue, we see the need to better understand what causes conflict and to examine what more we can do to prevent conflict, build peace and repair broken relationships.

The petitioners are requesting four things: to uphold and promote the United Nations declarations on the rights of indigenous peoples; to take leadership and resolve in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict based on respect for human rights and international law; use its influence to urge all parties in the Philippines conflict to resume the peace talks; and use its influence to promote solutions that address the root causes of conflict in Colombia.

HEALTH OF ANIMALS ACT

Ms. Jean Crowder (Nanaimo—Cowichan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition calling upon government to strengthen the animal transportation regulations.

It is calling on the House of Commons to amend the animal transport regulations under Canada's Health of Animals Act to be consistent with the findings of the EU scientific committee on animal health and welfare; to reduce transport time for pigs, poultry, horses, calves and lambs to 8 hours, and 12 hours for cattle, sheep and goats; and to ensure adequate enforcement of the regulations.

The petitioners are asking for these amendments to be implemented quickly.

IDENTITY THEFT

Mr. Mark Warawa (Langley, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour of presenting three petitions on behalf of constituents in beautiful Langley, British Columbia.

The first one is regarding identity theft. It states that identify theft costs Canadian consumers more than \$2 billion annually. They call upon the House of Commons to support and pass government legislation that will create three new offences directly targeting aspects of the identity theft problem.

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mr. Mark Warawa (Langley, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the second petition states there are a number of potentially life-threatening conditions that do not qualify for disability programs because they are not necessarily permanent.

They are calling upon the House of Commons to enact legislation to provide additional medical EI benefits to at least equal the maternity EI benefits.

FIREARMS REGISTRY

Mr. Mark Warawa (Langley, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the last petition says that the long gun registry was originally budgeted to cost Canadians \$2 million, but the price tag spiralled out of control and a decade later it is an estimated \$2 billion.

They call upon the House of Commons to support any legislation that will cancel the Canadian long gun registry.

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to present a petition, and sitting beside me is the member for Nanaimo—Cowichan, which is signed by over 200 individuals from Nanaimo, Duncan, Cowichan, right across Vancouver Island and the Lower Mainland of British Columbia.

These are citizens from British Columbia who are concerned about the federal government's inability to look at the issue of west coast halibut allocation.

The NDP has been calling for a summit on this issue of halibut allocation. We believe that the fisheries and oceans ministry has to take this into consideration and come to British Columbia to resolve this issue.

Yesterday I met with representatives from the B.C. Wildlife Federation, including Mr. Ken Franzen, who has just received the Fisheries and Oceans Canada national recreational fisheries award for his outstanding contribution to the industry through his conservation efforts and the sustainability of this important part of Canadian life.

The B.C. Wildlife Federation, which has a membership of over 100,000 and includes communities from across B.C., is extremely concerned about the negative impacts of the current allocation. They will have a flotilla of boats protesting this on Friday, in Victoria, to bring more awareness to this important issue.

● (1530)

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

Hon. Ujjal Dosanjh (Vancouver South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions, which I attempted to present yesterday, unsuccessfully. I am now properly certified.

The first petition is with respect to the issue of the Democratic Republic of Congo. The petitioners call upon the Government of Canada and all elected members of Parliament to take immediate action to provide relief to human suffering in the D.R.C. As Canadians, they implore us to fulfill our promise of "never again".

DARFUR

Hon. Ujjal Dosanjh (Vancouver South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the second petition is with respect to the genocide in Darfur. The petitioners ask us to take similar action.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Nos. 92 and 95.

[Text]

Question No. 92—**Ms. Irene Mathysen:**

With respect to the development of an Action Plan to advance the equality of women across Canada, announced in Budget 2008: (a) what is the time frame for the development of the Action Plan; (b) what department or departments are responsible for developing the Action Plan; (c) what monetary resources are being allocated to develop an Action Plan; (d) how many full time employees are being allocated to develop an Action Plan; (e) will there be any public consultation on the development of an Action Plan; (f) what organizations have been consulted; (g) what organizations will be consulted; (h) will Canada's commitment under the 1995 Beijing Declaration

Routine Proceedings

serve as the basis for the Action Plan; (i) what mechanisms of accountability will be built into the Action Plan; and (j) will eliminating systemic discrimination against women be the main objective of the plan?

Hon. James Moore (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with respect to the development of an action plan to advance the equality of women across Canada, announced in budget 2008:

In regard to a) In support of the federal action plan for women, since 2008, Status of Women Canada has been developing strategic partnerships to advance women's economic security and prosperity, to end violence against women and to increase the participation of women and girls in leadership roles across society. In 2009-2010, Status of Women Canada will be strengthening collaboration and building on partnerships with other federal departments and agencies, as well as with provincial and territorial counterparts, and with civil society partners, to continue this strategic direction.

In regard to b) Status of Women Canada is the lead departmental agency and is collaborating with other federal departments and agencies across the federal government to advance women's participation under the following three pillars: women's economic security and prosperity, violence against women and participation of women and girls in leadership roles across society.

In regard to c) The federal action plan for women is being developed within existing resources.

In regard to d) The work in support of the federal action plan for women that has already been undertaken and that is continuing to be developed is integrated into the work of the majority of full time employees of Status of Women Canada.

In regard to e) Status of Women Canada and the Government of Canada routinely receive ideas and suggestions from Canadian women regarding their needs and requirements. Preceding the announcement of the federal action plan for women, various roundtables and meetings will be held to identify areas of priority.

In regard to f) Discussions with various stakeholders will occur as the action plan is elaborated in 2009-2010.

In regard to g) Over the next months, additional organizations and individuals will be engaged on the federal action plan for women.

In regard to h) The 1995 Beijing platform for action, other international agreements such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women have and will continue to inform the federal action plan for women.

In regard to i) Like all government initiatives, the federal action plan for women will be subject to the usual accountability mechanisms and the officials responsible for its implementation will be accountable to Canadians for delivering real benefits to Canadian women and their families.

In regard to j) The federal action plan for women will be focused on key strategic directions that include: advancing women's economic security and prosperity; ending violence against women; and increasing the participation of women and girls in leadership roles across society.

*Government Orders*Question No. 95—**Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis:**

With respect to the government task force announced May 7, 2008 to stem the trade in illicit tobacco products, headed by the Department of Public Safety and including the RCMP, Canada Border Services Agency, Canada Revenue Agency, Finance Canada, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Health Canada and Indian Affairs and Northern Development Canada: (a) on what occasions has the task force met between May 7, 2008 and March 1, 2009; (b) what resources (personnel and budget) have been allocated to the task force's work; (c) what concrete measures to prevent contraband tobacco has the task force recommended be implemented; and (d) what communications have taken place between the task force and First Nations communities and other organizations that have expressed concern over the contraband issue?

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Minister of Public Safety, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Public Safety Canada has provided the following reply:

In regard to a) Senior members of the Task Force on Illicit Tobacco Products met collectively on three occasions between May 7, 2008 and March 1, 2009; May 14, 2008; June 12, 2008; August 6, 2008.

Members of the Task Force also met on July 2, 2008 with first nations leaders from the Akwesasne, Kahnawake, Six Nations and Tyendinaga communities.

Working-level officials from task force member departments and agencies are also in contact through meetings and/or conference calls, often on a weekly or more frequent basis, to share information and discuss illicit tobacco related issues and possible solutions.

In regard to b) The task force is resourced through existing reference levels. No new personnel or financial resources have been allocated to the work of the task force.

In regard to c) The task force is continuing its analysis of potential options that may be pursued to complement the RCMP contraband tobacco enforcement strategy that was also announced on May 7, 2008.

In regard to d) On July 2, 2008, task force members met with first nations leaders from the Akwesasne, Six Nations, Kahnawake and Tyendinaga communities. The task force members and first nations leaders in attendance agreed to work together in developing possible solutions.

On December 5, 2008, the chair of the task force met with the Grand Chief of the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne, and a follow-up meeting is planned for this spring.

The task force has created an email address for receiving input from all interested groups, including first nations and non-governmental organizations. Task force members also consult bilaterally with their respective stakeholders.

[English]

Mr. Tom Lukiwski: Mr. Speaker, I ask that all remaining questions be allowed to stand.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I ask that all notices of motions for the production of papers be allowed to stand.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

CRIMINAL CODE

The House resumed from May 5 consideration of the motion that Bill C-26, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (auto theft and trafficking in property obtained by crime), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Speaker: When this bill was last before the House, the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre had the floor. There are four and a half minutes remaining in the time allotted for her remarks.

I therefore call upon the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre.

Hon. Anita Neville (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to use a bit of the time remaining to conclude my remarks. I want to make it clear that I support Bill C-26.

We heard much yesterday about the high incidence of auto theft in the city of Winnipeg. We also heard yesterday that both the attempts and the actual theft of cars was being reduced, through a host of measures that had been undertaken by the provincial government and the police department of the City of Winnipeg.

However, I am pleased this legislation has come forward. It is long overdue. The leadership delegation from Manitoba came here 16 months ago to ask for auto theft to be made an indictable offence. The response was another piece of legislation, which really did not address the issue. The Prime Minister, as most are aware, came to Winnipeg and announced a bill, but it did not create a distinct offence for vehicle theft. It dealt with the VIN and the trafficking of stolen property.

The legislation is long overdue. As I indicated yesterday, in March 2008 I introduced a private member's bill, which went substantially further than this bill. I called upon auto theft to be an indictable offence, with a mandatory minimum sentence of one year after a second offence.

I am pleased to see the legislation here. I am pleased offer my support for it. I hope it will move through the House in a timely manner and that there will be an opportunity for colleagues to discuss it further in committee.

Government Orders

I want to emphasize the importance of prevention programs as well. There have to be consequences for the offence, but there also have to be prevention programs. We know the provincial government is doing this. It is incumbent upon the federal government to provide the support and resources for the provinces to do what they must do. It is important for the federal government not to disengage from anti-gang activity or programs that do not deal with violence in communities.

Prevention is equally important, but there have to be consequences to the action.

● (1535)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Marc Lemay (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I have listened carefully to my colleague, but unfortunately was not present when she started her speech so I do not know whether she mentioned this, but I have a question to ask her, one that I feel is important. Can she inform the House how many vehicles are stolen annually in the province of Manitoba, and in the Winnipeg area in particular? Has the number been going up or down in recent years?

[*English*]

Hon. Anita Neville: Mr. Speaker, I did address this yesterday. It was noted yesterday that a few weeks ago we had, for the first time, a day when there were no auto thefts at all in the city of Winnipeg, and that was quite remarkable.

However, the most recent figures I have indicate that from January 1 to May 3, there were 723 actual auto thefts and 799 attempted auto thefts, for a total of 1,522. Last year at this time, the total of both attempted and actual auto thefts was in the area of 2,700. The numbers are going down about 40% because of a variety of measures introduced by the police department, which include very concentrated and direct efforts to apprehend the well-known perpetrators of auto theft, the imposition of mandatory vehicle immobilizers and a variety of prevention and alternative programs that are currently funded largely by the provincial government.

This is why I indicated that the federal government also had to be there addressing these issues.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Marc Lemay (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to share my experience regarding auto theft with the House.

I practised criminal law for thirty years. The issue of auto theft comes up regularly. Throughout my career I saw numerous young people come before the courts on auto theft charges. I will come back to this point later, but lawyers consider there are two different offences: auto theft and joyriding. There is a fundamental difference between the two, and I think this needs to be taken into consideration when this bill is examined in committee.

In my opinion we need to let this bill, on which the Bloc Québécois will be voting in favour, go to committee for in-depth study. It is an important and worthwhile bill which addresses a phenomenon that affects our society.

My colleague from Hochelaga spoke yesterday about auto theft in major cities. My colleague has no car, so he is not at risk of car theft.

In big cities, the phenomenon is different than in the regions. Let me explain. I will compare the Montreal region and the Abitibi—Témiscamingue region. Obviously it is problematic to have your car stolen in Montreal, because the insurance companies are often rather uncooperative and there are investigations. That is no fun for anyone, but there is always the possibility of taking public transit. Obviously, the situation is the very opposite if you have your car stolen in a region like Abitibi—Témiscamingue, where there is very little public transit. A stolen car causes all manner of problems and difficulties.

Unfortunately, many vehicles stolen in the outlying areas end up in Montreal or the Montreal area or somewhere else, to be disassembled. This is a reality. A stolen car is rarely found in one piece. Generally, they are stolen, taken to a chop shop, transformed or modified. Expensive major parts are taken off and resold.

Society is plagued by auto theft. We believe that the new offence that would be created in the Criminal Code could be worthwhile and should be analyzed in detail. However, we should think twice before imposing mandatory minimum sentences for auto theft. I will come back to this shortly.

I would like to talk a bit about Bill C-26. This bill would create an offence for tampering with a vehicle identification number. This will not mean much to those who are watching. I will explain.

Every vehicle has an identification number, which the dealer notes when the vehicle is maintained. The dealer looks at the identification number, which is stored in a data bank. He knows what maintenance was done on the vehicle most recently, what sort of vehicle it is and what sort of maintenance it requires. This identification number is very important. The problem is that the number is found in only one place in the vehicle. Generally, it is quite visible. It has to be so that the garage can take note of it. It is inside the vehicle, on the edge of the windshield.

In committee, we can look at whether chips could be placed in other spots inside the vehicle, on important parts such as the wheel rims, the engine or the transmission.

● (1540)

Would it not make sense for manufacturers to put chips in vehicles to help trace them? I know from experience that a number of dealers have begun using this sort of identification, which could be used to trace these parts if the vehicle were stolen.

Let us go back to Bill C-26. I want to point out that in 2005, the Liberals introduced Bill C-64, which became Bill C-53, which has now given rise to Bill C-26. I hope that we will be able to pass this bill, because I feel it is important to create an offence for tampering with an identification number. I feel this is important because the bill will be broader in scope. Bill C-26 also targets the trafficking, exportation and importation of property obtained by crime.

Government Orders

Possession of stolen property is a Criminal Code offence. It means that you have in your possession an object that you are using and you know is stolen. For example, and this is the case unfortunately for many people, their car is stolen and, for one reason or another the VIN number disappears. Quite often the vehicle is found at the other end of Quebec or Canada. The vehicle has been transformed: it has been repainted and the doors replaced. The person buying the vehicle quite often believes that the vendor selling the car for an incredibly low price is honest. The courts have intervened on several occasions with regard to wilful blindness.

If you purchase a 2007 or 2008 Audi A4 for \$2,000, it is obviously a case of wilful blindness. You deliberately ignore the fact that the car may have been stolen. Someone who purchases a Mercedes, especially a recent model, for \$10,000 or under can expect to be charged with possession of stolen goods.

Heaven knows that there are many very honest people and I have met some in my career. They purchase a car at a reasonable price. I was looking at the list of stolen vehicles. Take, for example, someone who buys a 1999 Honda Civic coupe for between \$10,000 and \$15,000. They would expect to be purchasing a legitimate car, one that was not obtained by committing an offence such as theft. All this is difficult to prove. It is complicated for the courts to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that the person knew that the car was stolen.

Tampering with an identification number must be an offence. The vehicle identification number may be altered, modified or changed, but only by the dealer. When I read the bill I noted that this person will obviously not be prosecuted. That is not the purpose of the bill.

This bill creates the offence of trafficking in property obtained by crime, punishable by a maximum sentence of 14 years. It also creates sections 355.1, 355.2 and 355.3 in the Criminal Code. The definition will be important, since “trafficking” will not have the same meaning as it does in the Food and Drugs Act. It will correspond to the definition of the term “to traffic”, in the sense of to sell, give, transfer, transport, export from Canada, import into Canada, send, deliver or deal with in any other way, or to offer to do any of those acts.

• (1545)

With this, we are getting at the very heart of organized crime. Motor vehicle theft is very much the work of organized crime. A great deal of organization is required to have people who steal motor vehicles and bring them to specific locations so they can be disguised, changed or even broken down into pieces.

At this time, it is very difficult to identify the mags—pardon the expression—of a Passat, Beetle or Audi A4. It is very difficult to tell the difference if there is no chip or something to identify them. So the vehicle is broken down into pieces. That is what has been happening in many scrapyards, to use the jargon of those in the business. Of course they are not real scrapyards. The store front indicated auto parts, but motor vehicle were seen being brought in. We even have photos.

With this bill, we will be putting up a roadblock for organized crime—an appropriate expression given the subject. This must stop. Section 353.1 proposes the following offence: “Every person

commits an offence who, without lawful excuse, wholly or partially alters, removes or obliterates a vehicle identification number on a motor vehicle.” This is a recent offence, and very interesting. It is one of the reasons we will be voting in favour of this bill.

I do, however, have a serious problem and it is one that will require the bill to be examined very carefully. Here we are again with minimum prison sentences. Personally, I have a big problem with that. The Bloc cannot support minimum sentencing. That is not the solution. It is never the solution. They want to impose a minimum sentence on someone who is on his third auto theft charge. We need to be careful.

There are what are called joyriders and there are real car thieves. The first group are often kids from 15 to 19 who decide to steal a car just to get to a party or to look like a big shot—which is not really the case—to get from point A to point B. There is a specific section of the Criminal Code on this. Auto theft can be a theft in the legal sense, yet if it is a joyride, it is just some kids who see a car left near a convenience store with the motor running, and decide to take it just to get to point B, which is not far away. With respect, that is not auto theft. It is a theft from the legal point of view, but it is called instead taking a motor vehicle without the consent of the owner. There is a section in the Criminal Code on that.

We will have to be careful how minimum sentencing is imposed. I am very surprised to hear the Conservatives say, and say more than once, that someone who has committed at least three auto thefts should receive a minimum sentence. The problem is not when they go into prison, but when they come out. Let me quickly explain.

To give an example, the judge has someone before him who is on his third theft. He stole a car once and sold it to a scrapyard. He did this twice and got caught.

• (1550)

I would be very surprised if that person did not get a minimum prison sentence. The court needs to make sure the offender understands that enough is enough and that he cannot keep stealing cars. That is usually what happens. However, imposing minimum prison sentences....

If a person commits theft at 17 and then again at 18, should we not wonder why that person is stealing cars? The court should gather more information, analyze that information, and make sure that its sentence fits both the crime and the individual.

Government Orders

Now, the problem is that when a judge tells Mr. X that he deserves a prison sentence and then sentences him to six months in jail, that youth can get out in three weeks and never serve the time. That is the problem. I think that we will have to be very careful when we look at this bill in committee, because we have to consider minimum prison sentences for major crimes when we are dealing with a repeat offender who neither understands nor wishes to understand. I think that judges are the ones who should sentence offenders, and I think that they are well informed.

The Conservatives need to understand, listen and analyze. People convicted of offences should serve their time in jail and not be freed after serving one-sixth of their sentence. They should not be released until they have done some soul-searching and participated in rehabilitation sessions.

The problem is that a young person sentenced to 12 months in jail can be back on the street in a month and a half. Clearly, that is a problem, and it will continue to be a serious problem. We need to re-examine the parole system. That is what we are saying. We will vote for the bill so that it can go to committee, but the Conservatives need to understand that minimum prison sentences will not fix anything. We have to tackle the parole system.

• (1555)

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): Resuming debate. Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): The question is on the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): I declare the motion carried. Accordingly, the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights.

(Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and referred to a committee)

* * *

ENERGY EFFICIENCY ACT

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill S-3, An Act to amend the Energy Efficiency Act, as reported (without amendment) from the committee.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): There being no motions at report stage, the House will now proceed, without debate, to the putting of the question on the motion to concur in the bill at report stage.

Hon. Steven Fletcher (for the Minister of Natural Resources) moved that the bill be concurred in.

(Motion agreed to)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): When shall the bill be read the third time? By leave, now?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Hon. Steven Fletcher (for the Minister of Natural Resources) moved that the bill be read the third time and passed.

Mr. David Anderson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to address the House regarding the third reading of Bill S-3, a bill proposing to amend Canada's Energy Efficiency Act. The bill was discussed at second reading, went to committee and was dealt with very quickly there. We had agreement that the bill should go ahead. It came back here, and today we are debating it at third reading.

The purpose of the bill is fairly straightforward, and that is to eliminate the least efficient energy-using products from Canada's marketplace. Eliminating them will substantially help in reducing greenhouse gases and other atmospheric emissions.

This is not a long bill. It only has a few clauses. I want to summarize what the bill contains. We think it is important that Canadians understand what is in the bill because it is a significant bill. It has five main clauses.

The bill clarifies the classes of energy-producing products that may be established based on their common energy-consuming characteristics. Some of this was done in the past, but this will bring more clarity and will allow the government to move quickly in order to regulate some of these products that are not energy efficient.

The bill requires that interprovincial shipments of energy-using products meet the requirements of the act. It requires dealers to provide the Minister of Natural Resources with the prescribed information regarding the shipment or the importation of energy-using products. It provides for the authority to prescribe as energy-using products manufactured products or classes of manufactured products that affect or control energy consumption. It broadens both the scope of labelling provisions and the scope of the minister's report.

In short, that is what the bill does. The bill is only four pages long, but it is a significant bill.

The amendments will pave the way for energy efficiency regulations that will cover more products in this country more effectively. This will help Canadians save money by reducing household energy use and lowering home energy bills which every Canadian wants to do.

Energy efficiency is a central aspect of our government's plan to reduce greenhouse gases and air pollution. It is also central to our economic action plan.

Improving energy efficiency is one of the easiest, most cost-effective ways to control energy costs for consumers and businesses alike. Because doing so is good for the environment and for the economy, energy efficiency has become an important part of the Government of Canada's approach to tackling climate change.

Becoming more efficient energy users will also help Canada and Canadian families save money during these difficult times.

Government Orders

Improving energy efficiency has immediate benefits. Whether it is installing a programmable thermostat at home, a high-efficiency copier at the office or a more efficient electric motor at the plant, we begin saving energy. We start spending less money and indeed, we put out fewer emissions. The benefits start right away and they continue to grow, almost like compound interest, month by month and year after year.

As energy prices fluctuate, energy efficiency helps cushion those ups and downs and makes budgeting for energy easier for both families and businesses. With the long-term trend for energy prices likely to be higher, the savings in dollars would continue to get bigger.

I would like to give a little bit of history. Canada's Energy Efficiency Act came into force in 1992. It gave the Government of Canada the authority to make and enforce standards for the performance of energy-using products of two kinds: products imported to Canada and products manufactured in Canada which were shipped across provincial or territorial borders.

The act at that time also gave the federal government the authority to set labelling requirements for these products. This way, consumers then could compare energy efficiency of various models of the same product.

The first set of regulations flowing from the act came into effect in 1995. These regulations applied to a variety of products, primarily major appliances, things such as dishwashers, water heaters, refrigerators, freezers, clothes washers and dryers.

Since that time, the regulations pertaining to the act have been amended 10 times to reflect changing circumstances or to add more products to the standards list and to increase the stringency of the existing standards. We believe there is more that can be done.

●(1600)

Since that time, Canada has adopted some demanding environmental goals. We have committed ourselves to achieving an absolute reduction of 20% in greenhouse emissions by 2020 and 60% by 2050. This includes mandatory limits on emissions from large industry, but we must also substantially reduce emissions on other fronts as well. That is what Bill S-3 aims to achieve.

Regulations made under the revised act will expand the list of covered products and will tighten the standards for some of the products which are already regulated.

The proposed amendments will also make the act more efficient. For example, it will be possible to apply standards to whole classes of products instead of multitudes of individual products. This will be especially important in our attempts to reduce standby power consumption. I would like to talk about that.

Standby power is the electricity that is consumed by many products in our homes when they are turned off. I am speaking here of products such as TVs, computers, CD players, microwave ovens and battery chargers. As many as 25 or even more of these devices can be found in the typical Canadian home. Consequently, most Canadians do not realize that standby power can account for as much as 10% of an average household's annual electricity costs. Ten per cent of the bill is tied to this hidden use of power.

The question is, what if all of these products consumed a minimal amount of power in standby mode?

The Office of Energy Efficiency at Natural Resources Canada estimates that a typical household could cut its electricity cost by at least \$35 a year just by making those changes. Across the country, enough electricity could be saved in order to power more than 300,000 homes.

The amendments proposed in Bill S-3 will also allow us to make improvements to the well-known EnerGuide label. It will be even easier for consumers to compare the energy performance of different models of the same product.

Energy efficiency also helps to create and secure jobs. That is another important consideration during the current economic downturn. As soon as we decide to improve the insulation in our homes or to install energy-efficient windows and doors, we are creating and protecting the jobs of the thousands of Canadians who do that work and who manufacture those products.

I would like to bring up something else here, and that is the home renovation tax credit. It does not have anything directly to do with Bill S-3, but it is certainly an extremely popular change that this government has introduced in its budget.

The home renovation tax credit is a non-refundable tax credit that is going to be given for work performed or goods acquired in respect of improvements made to an eligible dwelling. Eligible dwellings are basically the houses that we use and that we live in personally. The credit is going to be based on eligible expenditures for work performed or for goods acquired after January 27, 2009 and before February 1, 2010. The work has to be done and the goods have to be acquired this year. That is obviously going to be important in this economy and the times in which we are living.

It seems that people have really taken to this across the country. People are aware of it. They seem to be more and more interested in doing renovations to their homes in order to access this credit.

The credit is only going to be available for the 2009 tax year. It applies to expenditures of more than \$1,000. People have to spend more than \$1,000 if they want to claim the tax credit. They can spend up to \$9,000. If they spend \$9,000, they will get a tax credit of \$1,350. It is a significant tax credit. Certainly from what I and my colleagues are hearing across the country, this is going to be a very popular measure in terms of making changes that are going to allow people to save energy and to make those renovations that will make their houses more energy efficient.

As well, Canadians will be able to take advantage of another aspect of our economic action plan. We have just allocated another \$300 million to eco-energy retrofit homes for the next two years, and increased all grants by 25%. That increase will further stimulate economic activity for the construction and service industries.

When all of these things are put together, we have quite a package in terms of encouraging people to improve their energy use and energy efficiency.

This will include energy auditors and engineers who assess energy use, providing information needed to make the best choices for making homes and buildings more efficient.

Just as important, the economic activity we generate when we invest in energy efficiency stays right here in Canada. It stays right in our communities supporting local contractors and tradespeople.

• (1605)

Finally, the amendments proposed in Bill S-3 will have a bearing on Canada's competitiveness because obviously, a more energy efficient Canada is a more competitive and a more prosperous country. Better energy efficiency means lower energy costs for both business and industry. That means the products that we make in this country and that we sell can be priced more competitively in the global market.

That is important to our future prosperity because other countries are also making some of these same investments in energy efficiency.

That is why energy efficiency has become a central part of our government's long-term economic plan. This is really seen as a strategic investment.

It is also important to consider the energy performance of the goods we produce. If made in Canada electric motors or windows are the most energy efficient, they will be much more attractive to our international customers.

In conclusion, there are numerous and significant advantages to be gained by the amendments proposed in Bill S-3. We would encourage members of the House to pass this bill as quickly as possible.

Hon. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the parliamentary secretary about the climate change aspects of the bill. He talked about energy savings. He talked also about the money savings that all of us could benefit from, from measures to lower the energy use of products we have in our homes. This is true and that is why we support the bill.

It is also true of course that we can benefit and lower our energy use by turning things off, like turning off our computers at night which is important that we do. I hope that my own family is hearing me. I hope my son is hearing me say that and is reminded to do that at home.

An hon. member: Good luck.

Hon. Geoff Regan: Apparently one of my colleagues has the same challenge.

What percentage of Canada's greenhouse gases does the bill represent? When will the government bring forward regulations to regulate our greenhouse gases? The government has been talking about doing this for three years now and we have seen no action.

• (1610)

Mr. David Anderson: Mr. Speaker, I actually did mention a number of ways in which our government has moved on that. The goals have been set at a reduction of 20% in greenhouse gases by 2020. This government is committed to making those targets.

Government Orders

I talked about the home renovation tax credit which will certainly make an environmental difference for many folks in this country when they are making these changes. They are aware of the fact that energy costs are high and they certainly will be making changes in their houses that will help them to be more efficient in their use of energy. As I mentioned, the home retrofit program is designed specifically to do that.

This government has moved on a number of fronts. Obviously, Natural Resources Canada has these three. The other departments have a number of other initiatives that they have put ahead as well. There is a package that is put together that is making a difference for Canadians.

I think they appreciate that. They particularly appreciate the things like the tax credits because they allow them to do that kind of work and to get some credit for it.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Christian Ouellet (Brome—Missisquoi, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I have two questions for the member.

One is along the same lines as the question my Liberal colleague asked. How can the government introduce such a bill without calculating the energy and emission savings? In his speech, the member said that emissions will be significantly reduced. But by how much? He should not trot out the figure of 20% by 2020. That is another specific bill. What will the emission reductions and the energy savings be with this bill? That is what we need to know.

I would also like the member to tell me why he is talking about home renovations when I did not see anything about that in the bill. Did he see something about that somewhere? The bill does not talk about home renovations or home energy efficiency. I would like to hear what he has to say about that.

[*English*]

Mr. David Anderson: Mr. Speaker, I think if the member had been listening to my last answer, he would understand what I said, which is that this government has come up with a package. There are a number of things that different departments are doing. Clearly, Bill S-3 is part of that package. It will make a significant difference in Canadians' lives. That is what it is about. It is about evaluating the products that are on the market right now and finding out if they are energy efficient enough to allow them to remain as they are. If they are not, then they will be regulated and they will have to be replaced by more energy efficient products.

Standby power is a clear example of a place where energy is used and we think we can do something about it.

The answer to the member's question is that it will depend on Canadians embracing the idea of energy efficiency, welcoming it and then adhering to these regulations. That is how the difference will take place.

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the parliamentary secretary about the home renovation tax credit as he is using that as a crutch for this bill.

Government Orders

It is important to recognize that in this tax credit scheme that the government has going, which does have some good stuff in it, it leaves out renters. Approximately 25% of Canadians are renters and it is even higher in Quebec. For example, a Muskoka cottage owner who builds a deck or re-sods the lawn can get a tax credit but renters cannot. What about renters in co-ops, especially seniors who are long term renters, who want to install new windows to reduce costs? Many apartment buildings have electric and other types of inefficient heating systems and renters need the opportunity to lower their bills because they are usually in the greatest need of support as they are lower on the income scale.

I would like to ask the parliamentary secretary why the government does not fix this. Why has it decided to punish many Canadians by not letting them into this program, especially when they could be putting savings in their pockets instead of subsidizing those who want to build decks and re-sod their lawns in Muskoka?

• (1615)

Mr. David Anderson: Mr. Speaker, is that not typical? The NDP is again against one of the most popular things that the government has done in years. It just shows how out of step it is with Canadians.

The home renovation tax credit is for people to renovate their homes and it will be available to them.

I do not think we need a crutch. As I mentioned, there is a package of legislative moves and a package of programs.

Mr. Brian Masse: What about apartments? You can't answer the question because you are too embarrassed.

Mr. David Anderson: It is unfortunate the member across the way does not want to listen to the answer. However, we have put together a package of programs and Bill S-3 is part of that package, as is the home renovation tax credit and the home retrofit program. When we put that all together, Canadians were very happy and excited to see what we were doing for energy efficiency.

Mr. Greg Rickford (Kenora, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the member for his hard work on this legislation and share his view that the home renovation tax credit is very popular among constituents in my riding.

I am curious and somewhat concerned about the sometimes inefficient standby power of household electronics. I was wondering if he could tell us a little more about how the amendments to the Energy Efficiency Act would address this issue.

Mr. David Anderson: Mr. Speaker, this is one of the things the bill is directly concerned about. We talked about the fact that it would give authority to the government to regulate energy-using products.

I do not think most Canadians understand how much energy they use. As I mentioned earlier, they have up to 25 different types of appliances plugged in that are often using a significant amount of energy by just sitting there, even if they are turned off. If a television is turned off, there is energy keeping it warmed up. If a CD player is turned off, there is energy being used in the background, even when people do not think it is turned on.

There is a whole host of other things, such as microwave ovens, battery chargers and computers. All of those things use a significant

amount of standby power. One of the goals of this legislation is to allow us to regulate and reduce that. As I mentioned, that is a significant amount of power. I am told it can account for as much as 10% of an average household's annual electricity cost. If most Canadians could save a significant amount of money on their bills, I think they would be very happy about that.

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that the government is interested in taking baby steps on energy efficiency but why are we not tackling the larger source of energy guzzlers, our industries? Why is the government not also tabling a bill similar to this one? In fact, why are we not making available to the public the kinds of proposals the government is thinking about making, which is what the U.S. government has just done in tabling its energy efficiency act requiring energy efficient standards across the board?

Why is the government not tabling a revised building code so that we do not tinker with old houses but will have better standards for all newly built buildings?

Mr. David Anderson: Mr. Speaker, I want to point out that the purpose of this bill is to regulate energy-using products, which is why it is called the Energy Efficiency Act. It is a small bill and it has that limited scope. That is what the purpose of the bill is.

We want to find ourselves in a situation where we are able to put products into classes so that we can better regulate them. We want to take a look at interprovincial shipments of energy-producing and energy-using products across the country. We want to ensure that dealers and the people selling these kinds of products will be supplying adequate information both to the government and to the folks who are buying those products.

I will admit that this bill has that scope and that is its purpose. We look forward to the opposition supporting us and getting this bill through as quickly as possible.

Hon. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, before I begin to speak to Bill S-3, I want to say how pleased I am I see many hon. members wearing carnations. Some members, perhaps, did not have a chance to get one before question period when they were being offered, but many are wearing them in recognition of the launch of the Multiple Sclerosis Society's Carnation Campaign. Last year I took part in the MS bike tour in Nova Scotia and hope to do so again this summer. I know many members will be supporting the MS Society and other charities, of course, in their ridings and across the country.

Government Orders

The natural resources committee dealt with Bill S-3, the amendments to the Energy Efficiency Act, for the third time last week. I say the third time because this bill, or one very similar, has been before Parliament twice before. Hopefully this time the government has it right because effective regulation of energy-consuming products is an important tool in our efforts to combat climate change. Canadians have known this for a long time and it is encouraging to see that the Conservative government might be starting to realize this too.

Bill S-3 deals with seven basic amendments, all of which were discussed in committee during clause by clause. That is the clause-by-clause analysis when each clause of the bill is considered, amendments are considered and the clauses are amended or passed.

One important change that the bill provides would allow government to regulate classes of products rather than individual products. This would include products defined by similar characteristics. That will be helpful, as we see more and more energy-consuming products coming on the market every day.

The problem in the past has been that when new products appeared that did not really fit into a description in the act, they could not be regulated effectively. Therefore, by having categories, it makes it much simpler because it is awfully hard to say what the next product will be. When we consider the phenomenal rate of change in technology in my lifetime and in the lifetime of many members here, we can certainly understand that we can expect and anticipate lots more interesting, exciting new technologies and developments, but it is important that we have the ability to regulate new products that come along.

Other amendments in the bill deal with issues like the potential stockpiling of non-compliant products, labelling and a requirement to report to Parliament every four years on the stringency of the act.

When people consider buying a refrigerator, a freezer or a stove, for example, they can see the label on the product that tells them about the kinds of energy use that product involves. I assume that when people buy a fridge, they think of those things. Modern fridges use far less energy and electricity than they did 20 years or so ago. Hence, people do look at those things. That labelling information is very important to consumers, but having standardized labelling is part of what this is about.

The basic premise of the bill is to broaden the scope of the government's ability to regulate energy-using consumer products, including products that affect or control energy consumption.

Bill S-3 is actually building on a 1992 act which established the regulations the first time to eliminate the big energy wasters, to promote energy efficiency in general and bring in labelling requirements, the kind I talked about a moment ago.

Bill S-3 significantly broadens the government's ability to improve energy efficiency, something that the Liberal Party supports. I congratulate the government on bringing this bill forward for the third time. I hope this time we can get it through, pass it on to the Senate shortly and it can finish with it before too long. As the senators consider it, as they should, and their duty is to have consideration of the bill, then we hope they will pass it and have it go to royal assent.

One aspect of Bill S-3 that I think is very important is the regulation of products that operate on standby mode. My hon. colleague, the parliamentary secretary, was talking a bit about that. We all have these kinds of products in our homes. Those are any products that we see some little light on, whether it is our DVD player, clock radio, microwave, some kind of games or whatever, those things that stay plugged in and have a little light flashing or the time showing on them, they are using energy all the time.

● (1620)

This bill would require companies manufacturing and selling those products to ensure they meet more stringent requirements in bringing down the kilowatt hours that they are using up with those items.

We all need to be more educated about energy consumption from products operating in standby mode. Hopefully, to some small extent, the fact that we are discussing this today will have a bit of that effect. This bill should be helpful in that regard.

I know the department, as the Department of Natural Resources has been doing for years, does make efforts to educate the public on that. I would encourage the department to do more of that. I was encouraged when departmental officials indicated that some amendments, like the reporting aspects of this legislation, were in response to comments that the opposition made in previous attempts to amend this act. It is sound, but a bit unusual for the government to listen to Parliament and committees in this fashion. However, it is a salutary incident and I congratulate the government on that.

I note that the roots of Bill S-3 are found in the original so-called clean air act that the former environment minister introduced in 2006. Parts of that legislation focused on the government's plan at the time to regulate large final emitters of greenhouse gases. It also involved the regulation of fuel consumption by automobiles, among other things.

After the House and committee made wholesale amendments to the climate change provisions of Bill C-30, the so-called clean air act, and actually made it a clean air act, the government, unfortunately, chose not to bring the bill back to the House for further debate. And the Conservatives wonder why they were labelled "climate change deniers".

Instead of bringing back the clean air bill in its entirety, the government decided instead to carve off the Energy Efficiency Act provisions and introduce them in a separate bill in the Senate. We are dealing with that now. The measures in this bill are fine as they are but we need to see more from the government in terms of dealing with climate change effectively.

While the government wasted several years in the process, the results in this case in relation to these items we use in our homes, will be more effective regulation of items like washers, dryers and fridges, through standards, labelling and education.

Government Orders

However, as many of my colleagues who have spoken on this bill at second reading pointed out, there are some concerns. Many Canadians are concerned because they know they cannot trust the Conservative government when it comes to bringing forth regulations to ensure the impact of the amendments outlined in Bill S-3 will be felt. We have seen in its other actions that it cannot be trusted to take action on climate change. We have seen no regulations. After three years of promising them, there are no regulations on greenhouse gases.

There are also concerns about the Conservative government's complete failure to understand that energy efficiency is a fundamental issue for not just the environment but also for our economy.

When this bill was debated in the other place, the Senate, my colleague from Alberta, Senator Grant Mitchell, raised many important questions about this bill. In fact, while the government leader in the Senate introduced the bill, it was Senator Mitchell who was the driving force behind these ideas and this bill, and has been for some time now. He was right when he noted that perhaps one of the biggest questions was the lack of trust that Canadians have that this neo-Conservative government will do anything it promises.

I said that Senator Mitchell was the force in the Senate working on this. However, many Canadians interested in this issue have also been working on this issue and I am sure they will be pleased to see some progress. I have heard from many Canadians who say that they simply do not trust the government to implement this or any other significant environmental policy. I find that troublesome and troubling.

While the Liberal Party supports a broadening of the government's ability to regulate products that use energy, it does not disguise the fact that these changes are in isolation and that they create a false impression that the Conservatives are doing something on the climate change file. Well, they are not doing much, other than waiting for the United States to tell them what their environmental policies will be.

● (1625)

We used to hear the Conservatives say that they would have a made in Canada plan for climate change. We are still waiting for that plan. We are still waiting for regulations. We have seen no actual action. Moreover, not only are the Conservatives not talking about a made in Canada plan any more, now they are waiting for a made in U.S.A. plan. It is quite a change for the government, but the net effect is nothing.

This is another reason why Canadians do not trust the Prime Minister or the government on environmental matters, climate change, any more than they can trust it to properly manage our country's finances or our economy.

We saw that last year times when the government and the country were in deficit, even before the recession began. We saw that in the first two months of the fiscal year and we saw it again in August.

The government claimed in November that everything would be fine, that the budget would be balanced. Then we saw money allocated in the budget for infrastructure which was not being spent.

The Conservatives were talking about stimulating the economy. They were telling us how urgent it was to pass the budget, yet the money, under their proposal, could not be spent until April 1. They were not getting things moving even before that. How concerned were they about where the economy was going? That is discouraging, but it is another matter.

It is true Bill S-3 would lead to more energy efficient products on the Canadian market. Hopefully this time the bill will make it all the way into law.

● (1630)

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the question to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment is as follows: the hon. member for Madawaska—Restigouche, The Economy.

Mr. Christian Ouellet (Brome—Missisquoi, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to know whether my colleague from Halifax West reacted as I did. I would like to know what he thinks about the fact that the secretary of state said earlier that energy efficiency was important, yet this is a slim, four-page bill.

Why call this the Energy Efficiency Act when it covers only appliances and a few other gadgets?

Energy efficiency is much broader than that. It affects buildings, all the large buildings, office buildings, factories and so on. It also affects the manufacturing industry, the residential sector and the whole transportation sector. But there is nothing about that in the Energy Efficiency Act.

How can the government say this is an energy efficiency act when it takes such a narrow view of energy efficiency?

How does my colleague from Halifax West react to the way the government sees energy efficiency?

Hon. Geoff Regan: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague for his question.

I agree with him. This bill is relevant for little things like refrigerators and household electronics, such as computers, and so on. That is true, and as I said in my speech, it is important to have rules and maybe a bill with broader scope that includes industries, buildings, and so on.

Energy efficiency is both an economic issue and an environmental one. We have a lot of opportunities to improve things both economically and environmentally.

[*English*]

Mr. David Anderson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to read, for the benefit of my colleague from the Bloc, what the legislation would actually do, as I do not know if he has read the bill. Section 5 states this can allow:

—prescribing as an energy-using product any manufactured product, or class of manufactured products, that is designed to operate using electricity, oil, natural gas or any other form or source of energy or that affects or controls energy consumption.

Government Orders

That seems to be very broad and covers far more than “gadgets”, the word he used.

My Liberal colleague made the comment that Canadians did not trust government to implement these changes. I do not think our government has brought about that skepticism. The Energy Efficiency Act was originally passed in 1992 by a Conservative government. For 13 long years absolutely no changes were made to it to improve energy efficiency. Again it is a Conservative government that is amending that act.

Why did the member's government do nothing for 13 long years with regard to energy efficiency? Why have we had to step forward and do this for Canadians?

Hon. Geoff Regan: Mr. Speaker, I trust my hon. colleague is aware that there were many measures taken by the Liberals during the 12 and one-quarter years when we were in government, which he likes to stretch to 13 and that is fine.

One gets the feeling sometimes that members of the government think they are in opposition again, when they try to point the finger in the other direction rather than take responsibility and be accountable for their own record. They have been in government for three years now. It is time to be accountable. I can recall being part of the cabinet that brought forward Project Green, which listed the six greenhouse gases that began the process of regulation. They have to be listed first and then six or eight months later the next process toward regulation can be started. That began in June 2005.

In January of the next year, the Conservatives became the government. We have waited and waited for any actual regulations. I think it is fair to say that there is a reason why Canadians do not trust the Conservative government on that question.

When he talks about the different classes of items, I guess the concern is this. What we have heard from the government and officials is about computers, washers, dryers and DVD players. We have certainly not heard about other major items. For example, officials were asked about whether the bill would be used to regulate automobile emissions. Theoretically, taking a look at the wording, it could be. However, they made it clear that it would not be used for that purpose.

Based upon the fact that what they are talking about is DVD players, et cetera, how can we have any confidence that it is going to be used for any major industrial facilities, et cetera?

• (1635)

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I will ask the member for Halifax West the same question I asked the parliamentary secretary, who refused to answer. This is an issue of fairness. This is the home renovation tax credit, which the parliamentary secretary introduced into this debate. Because 25% of Canadians are renters, they will be unable to have access to this type of a tax credit.

If people have cottages somewhere and they want to put on decks or sod their lawns, they will be able to access this tax credit. Meanwhile, if a renting senior or others who have been in facilities for a long time want to update their windows to have energy reductions on their bills and reduce greenhouse gases, they will not be eligible for the tax credit.

Does the member for Halifax West think that is fair?

Hon. Geoff Regan: Mr. Speaker, I think this is a reasonable concern. My hon. colleague, the parliamentary secretary, is correct when he says this is a popular measure. People who are building decks on their cottages are probably delighted to get a break on that. We would like to get a break on all kinds of things.

If people are concerned about climate change and the environment, what would be the best place to target these? People across the country were polled back when the recession started. They told us that they wanted a stimulus, a stimulus that would focus on things to help the environment and make us more competitive. What should the focus be for that? It seems to me that it would be reasonable to say that we should focus on things that will help people make their homes or apartments more energy efficient.

While I think it is important to include homeowners in that, I do not see why we could not give people who are in apartments an opportunity to benefit from the same kind of program.

Mr. John Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country, CPC): Mr. Speaker, a tax credit that is good for all Canadians does not become bad because it fails to apply to some Canadians. In both cases, the parties opposite were invited to provide input in prebudget consultations. In neither case did we get that.

Our government has produced a tax credit that is immensely popular across Canada. Next time around, I would hope the hon. member for Halifax West and my other colleague would present creditable comments during the time for consultation.

We also heard that the Conservatives had done nothing and had—

Mr. Brian Masse: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I point out for the hon. member that I did make submissions to the Minister of Finance, as did my party.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): I am not sure if that is a point of order, but I would remind all hon. members that we are dealing with Bill S-3 today. I ask that they keep their comments restricted to that.

The hon. member for West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country, a quick question, please.

• (1640)

Mr. John Weston: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Halifax West said that the Conservatives did not have an energy policy. Although it is not a Bill S-3 matter, we have a \$1 billion green energy program and the strictest mandated green house gas emission standards in Canadian history, a 20% reduction by 2020.

Hon. Geoff Regan: Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives say that they will have this 20% reduction as part of their so-called “Turning the Corner” plan, but they have not brought in any regulations to make it happen. They have done nothing to make this come into reality.

Government Orders

I encourage the member to speak to the Minister of the Environment and the Minister of Natural Resources and get the Prime Minister working on this so they actually have some real effective measures. I take it from the member's comments that he must be concerned about this, at least I hope he is.

I want to mention this. He is the member for West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country. I was just in Vancouver and the name of his riding describes the area very well. It is certainly a beautiful city and it was a pleasure to be there this weekend.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Paule Brunelle (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure today to again debate Bill S-3, An Act to amend the Energy Efficiency Act, which is intended to expand the regulatory parameters of the present act. The essence of the bill is laudable, but as the ad well-known to Quebeckers says, it will not change the world.

The present act dates from 1992, and a number of technological innovations since have forced us to take another look at this act to determine whether it is “in step” with those technological advances. The amendments proposed in this energy efficiency bill are going in the right direction, for they target non-regulated products and raise the standards for other products.

However, we have to determine whether this bill is not simply an update of the standards of the Office of Energy Efficiency, as this is of some concern to us. We need to show a real willingness to improve the energy efficiency of certain energy-using products with the aim of improving our energy efficiency and not with the aim of permitting the federal government to say that it is looking after the environment. We are afraid this may just be a bit of a smoke screen. We must admit, moreover, that the government's unwillingness to take action to protect the environment makes us a bit leery. But this bill is a start, and that is why we are in agreement with it.

The amendments made by this bill are thus intended to consider the advancement of knowledge about energy efficiency, to broaden the minister's regulatory authority, to introduce the concept of classes instead of considering each product individually. As well, they are intended to strengthen the minister's powers over the labelling of energy-using products, to standardize procedures, and to increase responsibilities for reporting to the House of Commons. That is a good thing. These objectives, I repeat, are entirely laudable. The extent to which they will be implemented remains to be seen.

For example, the amendments proposed in this bill would permit the establishment of strict vehicle emission standards and improve the energy efficiency of vehicles, since they have an impact on energy consumption. The bill would also permit, as proposed many times by the Bloc Québécois, the standardization of energy efficiency regulations in classes of products, thereby introducing mandatory vehicle eco-labelling, a measure implemented by Switzerland in 2002.

In this way we could send a clear message to consumers who wish to use energy more responsibly, by directing them to a class of vehicles classified as “green”, instead of certain very specific vehicles.

It is deplorable that the government has abolished the grants for fuel efficient vehicles. It is talking out of both sides of its mouth.

There are several interesting amendments to this bill, especially classifying energy-using products based on a single, common energy-consuming characteristic and the intended use of the products. Another interesting point is the power of the governor in council, which will cover a class of products and not just one product. Extending the regulatory power will mean that the act provides better coverage of a whole range of products in terms of energy efficiency.

This bill also provides for new or additional standards for industrial and consumer products and goods, such as commercial washing machines, dishwashers, fluorescent and incandescent light bulbs, and battery chargers.

This bill will impact the daily lives of citizens. As we mentioned earlier, use of standby mode must be retained. Many consumer products continue to consume energy even though we may not think so because the television set, DVD player or household appliances are turned off. These products nevertheless continue to draw energy. Therefore, we must make changes by equipping these appliances with an internal memory, which will save energy when they are turned off.

● (1645)

In this regard, the Office of Energy Efficiency estimates that if all of these products used minimum energy in standby mode, a typical household would save \$35 a year in electricity. That does not seem like much, but an energy saving like that all across Canada amounts to the energy used by about 300,000 households in a year, so what this bill does in terms of the environment is really very important. The number and variety of appliances that use standby mode will undoubtedly continue to grow in the years to come. That is why it is important to think about regulating energy use in standby mode for these kinds of items.

Requiring that the minister table reports in the House of Commons is an important amendment, and one that I think is desirable. Once every three years, the Minister of Natural Resources will have to compare the standards here with those in the United States and Mexico, to determine whether they are in step. That was a major concern of the Standing Committee on Natural Resources. Many household appliances, such as ovens and refrigerators, come from the United States and Mexico, so it is important to have common standards and to adjust them. As we heard, this bill has not been changed since 1992. Accordingly, revisiting it is crucial.

This approach, by standardizing labelling and energy efficiency criteria, may eventually facilitate the creation of a carbon market in the future. Obviously, that must be done willingly and competently. On these two points, allow me to question whether the Conservative government really wants to protect the environment. The Conservative record does not lead us to believe that the environment is a priority for this government.

Government Orders

I will explain. This bill has a number of qualities, including that of considering the standby mode, essential to the operation of a number of devices today, in setting energy efficiency standards. However, the government is bragging that, with these amendments proposed for the Energy Efficiency Act, it is implementing its nebulous green plan. I think this green plan is turning brown.

I realize that strengthening laws on the energy efficiency of televisions, DVD players, household appliances and other energy-using consumer products is a good thing. However, strong and integrated measures are needed to achieve real results. The government's regulatory framework to fight greenhouse gases is biased at its source. It is based on reductions in emission intensity for individual product units instead of on an absolute greenhouse gas emission target. The Bloc Québécois has repeatedly said that there is a consensus in Quebec and elsewhere in the world advocating the absolute reduction approach, which will lead to the establishment of a carbon market and a carbon exchange in Montreal.

This government's approach is unfair to Quebec, which has made a huge effort since 1990 to genuinely and absolutely reduce its GHG emissions. However, businesses in Quebec cannot benefit from nearly 20 years' efforts. It is our duty to prevent these efforts from being swept under the carpet because of the Conservative ideology that goes to any length to put the environment and the economy at odds.

For example, a Quebec aluminum company that has already reduced its GHG emissions by 15% in 1990 terms will have to agree to the same reduction in emission intensity as a company operating in the oil sands in Alberta, whose GHG emissions have doubled since 1990. Our manufacturing industry, which has suffered a great deal, will be penalized once again because it will not benefit financially from its efforts as it could have under an absolute target reduction plan.

In Quebec, we reject this outdated view. The economy and the environment work in tandem, and our businesses are often among the most productive in the world in environmental terms. Quebec's economy is separate from Canada's.

• (1650)

By applying this standard approach to all businesses, the government is leaving no room for a real territorial approach that would allow Quebec to act according to its own interests and peculiarities.

This is why we are saying that the government's green plan, which gave rise to this bill, is ineffective. Climate change represents one of the biggest challenges we have to deal with. As scientific evidence piles up and we see just how staggering the extent of the consequences is, it becomes imperative to act without delay, and in an efficient and, above all, fair manner.

This bill represents a step in the right direction, but there is still a very long way to go, and this government totally lacks the desire to go the rest of the way with Quebec. The Bloc Québécois is calling for a Kyoto implementation plan, namely an average greenhouse gas reduction of 6% below the 1990 level for the period 2008-12. The inaction of the Liberals and the ideological pig-headedness of the Conservatives are doing nothing to help us deal with the problem

The plan proposed by the Bloc Québécois is based on establishing reduction targets in the short and medium term, with 1990 as the reference year; the use of a territorial approach; establishing a carbon exchange in Montreal; and federal measures that the government can implement in its own areas of jurisdiction.

In closing, Bill S-3 is, as I have said, a step in the right direction but there is still a very long way to go. We agree with the essence of this bill. It will enable consumer to have a clearer picture of products and of their energy consumption.

Nonetheless, we are calling upon the Conservative government to stop handing over millions of dollars to the oil industry and stop encouraging tar sands development. Instead it ought to be decreasing our oil dependency, allowing the development of renewable energies, and encouraging environmental research and the growth of the green economy, which is the economy of the future. We believe it is very important to get to work on this immediately, given how very far we are lagging behind already.

[*English*]

Mr. David Anderson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the member opposite if she would clear up a bit of confusion between her presentation and the position of one of her colleagues.

Her colleague had said that this bill only affected gadgets, and he was fairly emphatic about that, but she talked at the beginning of her speech about the possible extensive application of this bill.

I wonder if she could address the inconsistencies in those two positions and talk about how she feels that this bill will actually be applied and what kinds of things it will actually affect.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Paule Brunelle: Mr. Speaker, I do not think that what my colleague said is any different from what I said. There is no doubt that this is a very technical bill designed to set energy standards for all sorts of products. As I indicated in my presentation, in terms of government action to effect greenhouse gas reductions, to set building standards for example—we know that 47% of the energy is used by buildings, but there is no real effort to address the problem—there is no real action with respect to putting forward any major environmental plan. That is what my colleague condemned, and I think he was right.

• (1655)

Mr. John Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Trois-Rivières for her speech.

I am a rookie here and there are two things that puzzle me. Perhaps it is because I am a new member in this House. I have heard that the measures had to be efficient and fair. But if this is efficient and fair for the country as a whole, I am struck by the fact that it does not satisfy the member opposite. I have heard a number of times that efficient and fair measures are required for Quebec, but it seems to me that she is ignoring the rest of the country. That is my first question.

Government Orders

My second question is this. She said that she supports Kyoto. We know, however, that Eddie Goldenberg and other Liberals have made it clear that they were not planning to implement Kyoto, nor did they have the ability to do so. Those are my two questions.

Ms. Paule Brunelle: Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague across the way for his question and I commend him on the quality of his French.

I do find this fight against greenhouse gas unfair. For the Bloc Québécois, it is clear that what is needed in terms of greenhouse gas reduction is not intensity targets, but absolute targets to create a real carbon market.

Take for example the Kruger paper manufacturing company, in my riding of Trois-Rivières, which has made huge efforts to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by more than 30%. The efforts made by such companies since 1990 have not been recognized. Had they been recognized, these companies could have obtained carbon credits as part of a true carbon exchange.

This would have been financially attractive for the companies and would have done a lot for the forestry industry, which has been going through tough times in recent years. That is why I said that, Quebec being ahead of the curve in terms of greenhouse gas reduction, it was unfair to Quebec not to use absolute targets.

Mr. Christian Ouellet (Brome—Missisquoi, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate my hon. colleague on her very clear presentation on Bill S-3. She clearly stated the position of the Bloc Québécois and Quebec.

Does she think that Bill S-3 will really make a difference with respect to greenhouse gas emissions, or rather that it does not take into account the real energy savings that could have been made possible in our world?

The member also mentioned that the manufacturing industry in her riding was already making efforts that are not being recognized.

While we support the bill—let me emphasize that—does the member think that it is a major piece of legislation with respect to greenhouse gas reduction?

Ms. Paule Brunelle: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

It is obvious that we are not dealing with a major bill to reduce greenhouse gases. However, we cannot oppose virtue, and consumers will receive more information on the energy efficiency of many products and we find that positive. That is why we support the bill.

On the other hand, if the government thinks it can avoid having a real green plan because it introduced Bill S-3, it is mistaken and we will be there to remind it at every turn.

• (1700)

[*English*]

Mr. David Anderson: Madam Speaker, I actually want to talk about another aspect of the bill that we have not really touched on today. One of the things that this government is famous for is its commitment to accountability and that started right from the very

first bill that we introduced in the first Parliament when our government came to power.

There are a couple of sections in the bill that deal with accountability and I would like the member's opinion. One of them reads:

Once every three years...the Minister shall demonstrate the extent to which the energy efficiency standards prescribed under this Act are as stringent as comparable standards established—

There are a number of jurisdictions listed such as provinces, the United States, Mexico and others. There is a second accountability provision as well that reads:

Within four years after the day on which this section comes into force, the Minister shall...demonstrate the extent to which energy efficiency standards have been prescribed under this Act for all energy-using products—

I wonder if the member is satisfied with the energy reporting requirements in the bill. She seemed to be at committee, but I would like her to talk about that a little.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Paule Brunelle: Madam Speaker, I thank the parliamentary secretary for his question.

As I said in my speech, I think it is wise to have the minister report primarily to the House of Commons, in what he calls accountability. I think that that is an improvement provided by the bill. It is particularly important because in many areas, technological changes are so rapid that it is crucial to remain up to date.

Since the act had not been reviewed since 1992, we are correcting a major oversight. I think that the requirement to table reports in the House of Commons will guarantee updates. I remain convinced that, unfortunately, our acts often lag behind reality but we will be in a position to make adjustments according to the evolution of things.

[*English*]

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am rising in support of the bill. It is commendable that the government has come forward with at least part of the provisions, as one of the previous members mentioned, which were included in the much more broader-based clean energy and climate change act.

It is regrettable that the government has decided, as some of the other members have mentioned, to cherry-pick measures, when in fact we need the full sweep to come forward and expeditiously to attack not only the issue of climate change but the issue of air pollution, which the government itself several years ago identified as a serious problem and promised to come forward with a package to address it.

So yes, we need to be coming forward with measures to improve the energy efficiency of appliances that are used by householders, but it is also incumbent upon the House to recognize that the largest user of energy in this country is not the householder. It is industry.

If we are actually going to get serious about tackling climate change and air pollution in a timely fashion, which has not happened in the last 15 years, we have to move forward more expeditiously with larger measures.

Government Orders

Personally, I find it very disappointing that the government has decided to move forward in such a narrow fashion. We had been informed over and over again by the Minister of the Environment that he is working in a bilateral dialogue with the United States of America, moving forward on energy security and climate change measures. Yet, day after day we see measures, binding laws, tabled in the United States going much further and much faster than in this country. It leaves me very puzzled.

The one thing that really troubles me is the way that we are making law and policy today in Canada. Back in the mid-1980s, when we first came forward with one of the major environmental statutes in this country's history, the first Canadian Environmental Protection Act, the government showed leadership. That was a Conservative government under Prime Minister Mulroney. It showed leadership and actually provide a white paper on exactly what that federal environmental statute would say and consulted extensively with industry, the public, municipalities and provincial governments.

Now we have moved into a mode where we simply come forward with measures that catch people off guard, or put in a reactive mode. This is not the way that I would prefer that we develop law and policy at the federal level.

It is for this very reason that I ran for office. I have undertaken with my constituents that I will try to enter into a constructive discourse with the government of the day on moving forward on these important agendas.

So yes, I applaud the government for moving forward with essentially a bill that came from the Senate and I look forward to the government actually tabling measures itself.

We have been promised that we would get new air pollution measures, particularly ones for the big industrial sectors, the very sources that are polluting the air, for example, the coal-fired industry. The Minister of the Environment mentioned to us last week that he is planning to come down heavy on the coal-fired industry in Canada.

I have to ask the government this. By what power? The main power that the federal government has to actually make our electricity cleaner in this country is environmental law. Therefore, I ask the government, where are those long promised laws to reduce and control pollution from the main dirty energy sources and from the energy guzzlers?

The tar sands are another example that consume vast amounts of our resources of clean gas that could be used to heat our homes. Where are the measures that were long promised to come forward?

I am presuming that in the United States-Canada dialogue that has been ongoing for some months, the public and Canada's energy sector so far as I am aware have been excluded. It is just like the security and prosperity agenda where the public was excluded. Let us open up this dialogue with the United States. We should not have to go to access to information, or go to our own federal counterpart and American counterparts to find out about their innovations.

• (1705)

The United States has brought forward and tabled a discussion draft of its law so that the public, industry, municipalities, states and

so forth that are impacted have time well in advance to provide input and make sure that the law makes sense.

One of the critical laws that was tabled is the American clean energy and security act of 2009, a very ambitious and comprehensive reform for U.S. climate and energy policy. That law, which I would presume the Minister of the Environment and the Minister of Natural Resources are well briefed on, has specific provisions, binding laws, which establish energy efficiency resource standards and impose energy efficiency requirements on electricity distributors that must reduce by 2020 15% of their energy use.

These are the kinds of measures that I would have anticipated the government would have come forward with. We have already seen our European trade partners moving forward with these kinds of measures. We have seen that the Americans have already tabled provisions similar to the provisions that we are debating today. Yes, they are moving toward making more appliances energy efficient but with a much longer, more comprehensive list of appliances. Why are we doing this in such a limited way?

As I mentioned in my previous question, I am wondering why we are not moving forward more expeditiously with a national building code. It is good that the government has decided to put some limited funds into moving forward the retrofit program. It is very sad that the government has not at least, as has the United States, committed to retrofit all of its own buildings. Information was provided to me by the government about a month ago that out of the more than 20,000 buildings the government has control over, only 10 of those buildings are in the process of being retrofitted.

Yes, maybe it is laudable that we are doing this one small measure, but why are we nickel-and-diming improvement in energy efficiency? Why are we nickel-and-diming the protection of Canadians' health and environment? Why is the government not bringing forward a comprehensive package, long awaited, to address air pollution?

There has been a round table going on in Canada for the last two years that was initiated by the energy sector and environmental organizations, not the government, that were desperate to move forward co-operatively on an agenda to actually clean up our industry and make it more efficient and cleaner running. To this day, that report sits gathering dust. There has been no action by the government.

Let us bring forward that initiative which the energy sector and public interests groups have agreed on. Let us bring it forward in binding legislation before the House. I welcome the opportunity to support that initiative. I welcome the opportunity to support our clean energy sector in Canada.

We have a government that is bringing forward this minuscule measure, when it has cut entirely out of its budget any support to the renewable energy sector. At the same time, in Europe and the United States there is a massive infusion of dollars in support so that they are becoming competitive. We are now learning that European investors are going to the United States and investing in its renewable energy sector while ours is languishing.

Government Orders

This is another sector that could help us out when we are losing jobs from the fossil fuel industry that is shutting down in my own province because of the crashing economy, when in fact we could have another sector move in that would make us more energy efficient, provide cleaner energy, and help us move forward and show leadership worldwide.

Yes, I support this bill, but I am very saddened that it is such a small measure. I encourage the government from the depth of my heart to please listen to what the citizens of Canada are saying. Poll after poll is saying that Canadians desperately want their governments to support initiatives, provide incentives and move forward, so that they can access to cleaner electricity and energy. We want to do our part in addressing climate change and making sure that our children and grandchildren are going to have a healthier future, and not have to rely on the fossil fuel industry.

• (1710)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Christian Ouellet (Brome—Missisquoi, BQ): Madam Speaker, I know the hon. member for Edmonton—Strathcona quite well, because we work together in committee. I like her attitude regarding energy in general and I fully appreciate the comments she just made.

I have a question for her. Earlier, we put a question to the parliamentary secretary, which he could not answer, as to how this bill would fit into his plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 20% by 2020 without putting numbers on energy savings or greenhouse gas emission reductions.

How can he propose such a bill when the Conservatives refuse to study Bill C-311, an NDP bill, as long as that bill's proponents have not presented cost estimates?

Could the NDP member tell me what is her interpretation of the government's different attitude from one bill to the next?

[*English*]

Ms. Linda Duncan: Madam Speaker, I, too, believe that in this House we should be consistent in how we deal with all proposals that come forward, regardless which member of Parliament raises them, regardless which side of the House they are on.

One of the things that troubles me is there seems to be a denial of the value of science on the other side of the House and a denial of the fact that the world is moving at a rapid pace towards cleaner technologies. There seems to be a failure of appreciation of the fact that the world is embracing cleaner technologies. It is very important that there is equal effort in calculating not only the cost of moving forward with these cleaner technologies, but what the cost would be if we do not act expeditiously. That is what Sir Nicholas Stern is telling us very clearly.

• (1715)

Mr. David Anderson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC): Madam Speaker, I think we and the opposition need to recognize and acknowledge that this is going to have a significant impact on emissions. The 1992 act regulated products. This goes much further than that. It would allow us to put products into classes so that we can regulate them as groups, not individually.

There are a number of other amendments in there. I read one out earlier that would give the government broad authority to regulate basically any product that uses, affects or controls energy consumption.

Certainly, as I mentioned earlier, Canadians are the ones who are going to determine the true impact of this bill. As they make their decisions about the products they purchase, that is going to have an impact on how much this affects our environment in a positive way.

However, I want the member's opinion. Does she not believe, and I think the NDP does because it is supporting the bill, that this would have a significant impact on emissions and on the environment across the country?

Ms. Linda Duncan: Madam Speaker, of course we think there is value in the bill or we would not be voting in favour of it. That is not to say that we agree that it will have a significant effect.

Obviously it is important for everybody to contribute to the reduction of greenhouse gases and to cleaner air. However, the government has the power to move forward on those sources that are the major causes of the problem in climate change and in air pollution, and it continues to stall on bringing forward the regulations to put the binding standards on the industrial sector and setting the binding targets. The energy sector itself is begging the government to come forward so that it can know where it is at and so that it can enter the cap and trade system.

Yes, they are laudable. I am glad they are being passed, and I look forward to actual enforcement of the bill. However, what is more important is that we move forward an entire plan. Let us bring forward a comprehensive bill, as they are doing in the United States. Let us learn from those dialogues if we are involved in them. Let us open up the dialogue so that we can all know what is being discussed and can all learn from those lessons.

I have benefited from discussions with American scientists and American lawmakers. I think it is incumbent upon this House to be sharing those dialogues widely with everybody in Canada so that we can know what measures are possible, so that we can expect that our government will move forward and adopt those as well.

Mr. Leon Benoit (Vegreville—Wainwright, CPC): Madam Speaker, I listened to the member give her presentation. She made some comments on the Alberta oil sands. Those comments were very negative towards the oil sands.

I do not think she has recognized the really significant improvement in the environmental record of the companies involved in the oil sands, the significant restoration that has already been done on some of the land that has been mined in the past.

Clearly the member either does not recognize or is not particularly concerned about the fact that in her constituency live thousands of workers who depend on the oil sands for their jobs.

She cannot have it both ways. Either she wants the oil sands to continue to develop and therefore for those constituents of hers to continue to have their jobs, or she wants the oil sands to be stopped and is willing to see those jobs lost.

It cannot be both ways. Progress in the oil sands cannot be stopped while still maintaining jobs. It simply does not work.

Government Orders

I wonder how the member responds to her constituents whose livelihoods depend upon development in the oil sands, and as I have said, development that has become more and more environmentally friendly as time goes on?

Ms. Linda Duncan: Madam Speaker, I welcome the question, although it does not seem to have relevance to what I said. Today we are speaking about energy efficiency, not about reclamation. Truth be told, in fact, a very minuscule percentage of the oil sands or mine lands have been certified as reclaimed. It is an ongoing problem.

It is precisely because of the downturn in the oil sands that I am speaking so vociferously in favour of the government finally taking action to provide other employment opportunities in my province.

There has been 100% reliance on the oil sands filling the coffers of the federal government. The workers of Alberta deserve better attention and protection for sustainability of their employment. If we could have had a genuine major retrofit program supported by the federal government and a major program and a budget to support the development of the renewable energy sector, there could be jobs to fall back on.

The government dropped the ball. They put all the money into fossil fuels and yanked all the money out of all the alternative job creation prospects. So shame on the government.

I am the one who is standing up. The majority of people in Alberta have been asking for a pacing of the tar sands. I have never in this House said that I am opposed to the tar sands. I stand firm on the position that the tar sands should proceed within the full ambit and enforcement of strong federal and provincial environmental laws. That is simply what the people of Alberta are asking for. That is what the first nations who are impacted downstream and downwind are asking for. It is the responsibility of the government to stand up, particularly for first nations people.

Absolutely, that is why I am taking the position I am. We need to make sure that, like the United States, Europe and the Asian countries, we are moving towards a sustainable economy, which, as the International Energy Agency has said, is fossil fuel-based, but it is time to move forward with a new green energy economy.

• (1720)

Mr. Mark Warawa (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC): Madam Speaker, my question for the member is in regard to the fuel efficiency or energy efficiency program being proposed by the Liberals as the job-killing carbon tax.

In the past, the NDP supported that carbon tax. Does she support a job-killing carbon tax?

I know the NDP in B.C. does not. Does her federal party support the carbon tax?

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Denise Savoie): The hon. member for Brome—Missisquoi on a point of order.

Mr. Christian Ouellet (Brome—Missisquoi, BQ): Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. That question has absolutely nothing to do with Bill S-3. I am sorry, but it has nothing to do with it.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Denise Savoie): I shall be flexible, considering we are dealing with energy and energy efficiency. I am sure the hon. member for Edmonton—Strathcona will give a relevant answer.

The hon. member for Edmonton—Strathcona.

[*English*]

Ms. Linda Duncan: Thank you, Madam Speaker, for the intervention on my behalf. I have no problem answering the question.

From my personal perspective as the member of Parliament for Edmonton—Strathcona and for my party, we do not care what measure is taken as long as it sets the appropriate value on carbon so we actually start driving change.

This debate over cap and trade versus carbon tax has to end, and it has to end here today. Everybody worldwide has admitted that we must have the right value on carbon and we must put that in place now to drive the change as expeditiously as possible.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Christian Ouellet (Brome—Missisquoi, BQ): Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise today on this bill because we expect a lot from energy efficiency. It should be the norm by now. The first energy efficiency bill was introduced in 1992. Then nothing was done to improve energy efficiency for 17 years, even though the technology was changing.

Today the government has laboured mightily and given birth to a mouse. There may be headlines about energy efficiency but the results are tiny. We believe in energy efficiency and will therefore vote for the bill, but not because we think it is a major step forward that could be considered part of the government's plan to reduce emissions by 20%. It is really puny. This is a very small bill. We will vote for it because we have nothing against mice. But is this something that will make a significant contribution to reducing greenhouse gases and our energy usage, as real energy efficiency could?

My colleague asked a question a little while ago about whether the hon. member from the NDP was opposed to using oil sands to produce fuel oil. That is not the question. If we were really serious about energy efficiency, the amount of fuel oil needed on earth and in Canada as a whole could be reduced. In that case, energy efficiency would have a major effect.

Private Members' Business

However, they are not talking here about changing our windows and insulation or making better foundations. They are not talking about changing the way heat is generated. They are talking about little things, the kitchen appliances and gadgets people have around their houses. They even talk about standby power. We agree in principle about standby power. However, that should be just one paragraph among fifty indicating where to save energy.

They say this will save 10% of the energy used in homes. As one of our colleagues just said, this applies only if people buy new equipment. It does not change the old equipment at all and will not change the situation very much. We know that homes built before 1940 can save as much as 65% of the energy they use. That is huge. It is not 10% but 65%. The amount of energy used in houses built in the 1960s and 1970s could easily be reduced by 50% to 55%. The amount of energy used by houses built in the last 10 years could easily be reduced by 40% to 45% because small improvements to prevent air exchanges have been made to these kinds of buildings. But the government talks proudly about a 10% energy reduction. That is what I call a mouse.

As I said earlier, beginning in 1992, energy efficiency improvements have been made in all areas, especially in factories, large buildings and high-rises. That is something we could do again. I am talking about buildings like those that belong to the government. They have been in power for three years, and the building next to the Confederation building still has single-glazed windows. Is that what they call energy efficiency? Honestly! All Government of Canada buildings are at about the same level: poorly renovated or not renovated at all.

The energy efficiency renovation industry creates as many jobs as the oil sands—maybe even more. Moreover, these jobs are located all over Canada, including in rural communities.

• (1725)

This would be an incredibly effective measure in this time of crisis, but they do not seem to get it.

I think that this bill, which makes grand claims to be about energy efficiency, is just a smokescreen. It does not really have anything to do with an action plan for a new green economy. We need an action plan for better living, an action plan that helps people waste less energy and reduces Canada's debt. Right now, our debt is huge because we use so much energy that comes from outside Canada. Even if we were to use our own energy from Alberta in eastern Canada, we would have to build pipelines, which would be very expensive.

If we reduce our electricity consumption through energy efficiency measures, our economic health will improve. They keep talking about taxes. I am not talking about taxes; I am talking about saving money. If we had more efficient cars, which we could have had for the past three years, we would save money and the planet by emitting fewer and fewer greenhouse gases, and—

• (1730)

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Denise Savoie): I am sorry to have to interrupt the hon. member. He will have an opportunity to continue his interesting comments when we resume debate.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[Translation]

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND THE CANADIAN EXTRACTIVE INDUSTRY IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

The House resumed from April 29, 2009, consideration of the motion.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Denise Savoie): It being 5:30 p.m., the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on motion M-283 under private members' business, standing in the name of the member for Pierrefonds—Dollard.

Call in the members.

• (1800)

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

(Division No. 60)

YEAS

Members

Allen (Welland)	André
Andrews	Angus
Ashton	Asselin
Bachand	Bagnell
Bains	Beaudin
Bélanger	Bellavance
Bennett	Bevilacqua
Bevington	Bigras
Blais	Bonsant
Bouchard	Bourgeois
Brisson	Brunelle
Byrne	Cannis
Cardin	Carrier
Charlton	Chow
Christopherson	Coady
Coderre	Comartin
Cotler	Crombie
Crowder	Cuzner
D'Amours	Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)
Davies (Vancouver East)	DeBellefeuille
Demers	Deschamps
Desnoyers	Dewar
Dhaliwal	Dion
Dorion	Dosanjh
Duceppe	Dufour
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)
Easter	Eyking
Faillon	Folco
Foote	Fry
Garneau	Godin
Gravelle	Guarnieri
Guay	Guimond (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques)
Guimond (Montmorency—Charlevoix—Haute-Côte-Nord)	
Hall Findlay	
Harris (St. John's East)	Holland
Hughes	Hyer
Jennings	Julian
Kania	Karygiannis
Laframboise	Lalonde
Lavallée	Layton
LeBlanc	Lee
Lemay	Leslie
Lessard	Lévesque
MacAulay	Malhi
Malo	Maloway
Marston	Martin (Winnipeg Centre)
Martin (Sault Ste. Marie)	Masse

Private Members' Business

Mathysen
McGuinty
Ménard (Hochelaga)
Mendes
Mulcair
Murphy (Charlottetown)
Nadeau
Oliphant
Pacetti
Paquette
Pearson
Pomerleau
Rae
Ratansi
Rodriguez
Roy
Savage
Sgro
Simms
Stoffer
Thi Lac
Tonks
Valeriotte
Volpe
Wilfert
Zarac— 143

McCallum
McTeague
Ménard (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin)
Minna
Murphy (Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe)
Murray
Neville
Ouellet
Paillé
Patry
Plamondon
Proulx
Rafferty
Regan
Rota
Russell
Savoie
Siksay
St-Cyr
Szabo
Thibeault
Trudeau
Vincet
Wasylycia-Leis
Wrzesnewskyj

Rickford
Saxton
Schellenberger
Shipley
Smith
Stanton
Strahl
Thompson
Toews
Tweed
Van Kesteren
Vellacott
Wallace
Warkentin
Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country)
Weston (Saint John)
Wong
Yelich
Ritz
Scheer
Shea
Shory
Sorenson
Storseth
Sweet
Tilson
Trost
Uppal
Van Loan
Verner
Warawa
Watson
Woodworth
Young— 140

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

* * *

[English]

STANDING ORDERS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

The House resumed from May 4 consideration of the motion.

The Speaker: The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on Motion No. 277 under private members' business.

● (1810)

[Translation]

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

(Division No. 61)

YEAS

Members

Abbott
Aglukkaq
Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)
Ambrose
Anderson
Ashfield
Benoit
Blackburn
Block
Boughen
Breitkreuz
Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)
Bruinooge
Calandra
Cannan (Kelowna—Lake Country)
Carrie
Chong
Clement
Davidson
Del Mastro
Dreeshen
Dykstra
Finley
Fletcher
Gallant
Goldring
Gourde
Guergis
Hawn
Hill
Hoepfner
Jean
Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)
Kent
Komarnicki
Lake
Lebel
Lobb
Lunn
MacKay (Central Nova)
Mark
McColeman
Menzies
Miller
Moore (Fundy Royal)
Norlock
O'Neill-Gordon
Paradis
Petit
Prentice
Raitt
Rathgeber
Richards

NAYS

Members

Ablonczy
Albrecht
Allison
Anders
Arthur
Baird
Bernier
Blaney
Boucher
Braid
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)
Brown (Barrie)
Cadman
Calkins
Cannon (Pontiac)
Casson
Clarke
Cummins
Dechert
Devolin
Duncan (Vancouver Island North)
Fast
Flaherty
Galipeau
Glover
Goodyear
Grewal
Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)
Hiebert
Hoback
Holder
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Kerr
Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
Lauzon
Lemieux
Lukiwski
Lunney
MacKenzie
Mayes
McLeod
Merrifield
Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)
Nicholson
O'Connor
Oda
Payne
Poilievre
Preston
Rajotte
Reid
Richardson

Abbott
Aglukkaq
Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)
Ambrose
Anderson
Ashfield
Benoit
Blackburn
Block
Boughen
Breitkreuz
Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)
Bruinooge
Calandra
Cannan (Kelowna—Lake Country)
Carrie
Chong
Clement
Davidson
Del Mastro
Dreeshen
Dykstra
Finley
Fletcher
Gallant
Goldring
Gourde
Guergis
Hawn
Hill
Hoepfner
Jean
Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)
Kent

Ablonczy
Albrecht
Allison
Anders
Arthur
Baird
Bernier
Blaney
Boucher
Braid
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)
Brown (Barrie)
Cadman
Calkins
Cannon (Pontiac)
Casson
Clarke
Cummins
Dechert
Devolin
Duncan (Vancouver Island North)
Fast
Flaherty
Galipeau
Glover
Goodyear
Grewal
Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)
Hiebert
Hoback
Holder
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Kerr

Private Members' Business

Komarnicki	Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)	Lemay	Leslie
Lake	Lauzon	Lessard	Lévesque
Lebel	Lemieux	MacAulay	Malhi
Lobb	Lukiwski	Malo	Maloway
Lunn	Lunney	Marston	Martin (Winnipeg Centre)
MacKay (Central Nova)	MacKenzie	Martin (Sault Ste. Marie)	Masse
Mark	Mayer	Mathysen	McCallum
McColeman	McLeod	McQuinty	McTeague
Menzies	Merrifield	Ménard (Hochelaga)	Ménard (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin)
Miller	Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)	Mendes	Minna
Moore (Fundy Royal)	Nicholson	Mulcair	Murphy (Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe)
Norlock	O'Connor	Murphy (Charlottetown)	Murray
O'Neill-Gordon	Oda	Nadeau	Neville
Paradis	Payne	Oliphant	Ouellet
Petit	Poilievre	Pacetti	Pailé
Prentice	Preston	Paquette	Patry
Raitt	Rajotte	Pearson	Plamondon
Rathgeber	Reid	Pomerleau	Proulx
Richards	Richardson	Rae	Rafferty
Rickford	Ritz	Ratansi	Regan
Saxton	Scheer	Rodriguez	Rota
Schellenberger	Shea	Roy	Russell
Shiple	Shory	Savage	Savoie
Smith	Sorenson	Sgro	Siksay
Stanton	Storseth	Simms	St-Cyr
Strahl	Sweet	Stoffer	Szabo
Thompson	Tilson	Thi Lac	Thibeault
Toews	Trost	Tonks	Trudeau
Tweed	Uppal	Valeriot	Vincent
Van Kesteren	Van Loan	Volpe	Wasylycia-Leis
Vellacott	Verner	Wilfert	Wrzesnewskij
Wallace	Warawa	Zarac — 143	
Warkentin	Watson		
Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country)			
Weston (Saint John)			
Wong	Woodworth		
Yelich	Young — 140		

NAYS

Members

Allen (Welland)	André
Andrews	Angus
Ashton	Asselin
Bachand	Bagnell
Bains	Beaudin
Bélanger	Bellavance
Bennett	Bevilacqua
Bevington	Bigras
Blais	Bonsant
Bouchard	Bourgeois
Brison	Brunelle
Byrne	Cannis
Cardin	Carrier
Charlton	Chow
Christopherson	Coady
Coderre	Comartin
Cotler	Crombie
Crowder	Cuzner
D'Amours	Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)
Davies (Vancouver East)	DeBellefeuille
Demers	Deschamps
Desnoyers	Dewar
Dhaliwal	Dion
Dorion	Dosanjh
Duceppe	Dufour
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)
Easter	Eyking
Faillie	Folco
Foote	Fry
Garneau	Godin
Gravelle	Guarnieri
Guay	Guimond (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les
Basques)	
Guimond (Montmorency—Charlevoix—Haute-Côte-Nord)	
Hall Findlay	
Harris (St. John's East)	Holland
Hughes	Hyer
Jennings	Julian
Kania	Karygiannis
Laframboise	Lalonde
Lavallée	Layton
LeBlanc	Lee

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion lost.

PAIRED

* * *

[English]

SERVICE CANADA

The House resumed from May 5 consideration of the motion, of the amendment and of the amendment to the amendment.

The Speaker: The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the subamendment to the amendment to Motion No. 276 under private members' business.

● (1815)

[Translation]

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

(Division No. 62)

YEAS

Members

Allen (Welland)	André
Andrews	Angus
Ashton	Asselin
Bachand	Bagnell
Bains	Beaudin
Bélanger	Bellavance
Bennett	Bevilacqua
Bevington	Bigras
Blais	Bonsant
Bouchard	Bourgeois
Brison	Brunelle
Byrne	Cannis
Cardin	Carrier
Charlton	Chow
Christopherson	Coady
Coderre	Comartin
Cotler	Crombie

Private Members' Business

Crowder	Cuzner	Finley	Flaherty
D'Amours	Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)	Fletcher	Galipeau
Davies (Vancouver East)	DeBellefeuille	Gallant	Glover
Demers	Deschamps	Goldring	Goodyear
Desnoyers	Dewar	Gourde	Grewal
Dhaliwal	Dion	Guergis	Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)
Dorion	Dosanjh	Hawn	Hiebert
Duceppe	Dufour	Hill	Hoback
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)	Hoepfner	Holder
Easter	Eyking	Jean	Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
Faille	Folco	Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)	Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Foote	Fry	Kent	Kerr
Garneau	Godin	Komarnicki	Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
Gravelle	Guarnieri	Lake	Lauzon
Guay	Guimond (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les	Lebel	Lemieux
Basques)		Lobb	Lukiwski
Guimond (Montmorency—Charlevoix—Haute-Côte-Nord)		Lunn	Lunney
Hall Findlay		MacKay (Central Nova)	MacKenzie
Harris (St. John's East)	Holland	Mark	Mayes
Hughes	Hyer	McColeman	McLeod
Jennings	Julian	Menzies	Merrifield
Kania	Karygiannis	Miller	Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)
Laframboise	Lalonde	Moore (Fundy Royal)	Nicholson
Lavallée	Layton	Norlock	O'Connor
LeBlanc	Lee	O'Neill-Gordon	Oda
Lemay	Leslie	Paradis	Payne
Lessard	Lévesque	Petit	Poillievre
MacAulay	Malhi	Prentice	Preston
Malo	Maloway	Raitt	Rajotte
Marston	Martin (Winnipeg Centre)	Rathgeber	Reid
Martin (Sault Ste. Marie)	Masse	Richards	Richardson
Mathysen	McCallum	Rickford	Ritz
McGuinty	McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)	Saxton	Scheer
McTeague	Ménard (Hochelaga)	Schellenberger	Shea
Ménard (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin)	Mendes	Shiple	Shory
Minna	Mulcair	Smith	Sorenson
Murphy (Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe)	Murphy (Charlottetown)	Stanton	Storseth
Murray	Nadeau	Strahl	Sweet
Neville	Oliphant	Thompson	Tilson
Ouellet	Pacetti	Toews	Trost
Paillé	Paquette	Tweed	Uppal
Patry	Pearson	Van Kesteren	Van Loan
Plamondon	Pomerleau	Vellacott	Verner
Proulx	Rae	Wallace	Warawa
Rafferty	Ratansi	Warkentin	Watson
Regan	Rodriguez	Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country)	
Rota	Roy	Weston (Saint John)	
Russell	Savage	Wong	Woodworth
Savoie	Sgro	Yelich	Young — 140
Siksay	Simms		
St-Cyr	Stoffer		
Szabo	Thi Lac		
Thibeault	Tonks		
Trudeau	Valeriot		
Vincent	Volpe		
Wasylcia-Leis	Wilfert		
Wrzesniewskyj	Zarac — 144		

NAYS

Members

Abbott	Ablonczy
Aglukkaq	Albrecht
Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)	Allison
Ambrose	Anders
Anderson	Arthur
Ashfield	Baird
Benoit	Bernier
Blackburn	Blaney
Block	Boucher
Boughen	Braid
Breitkreuz	Brown (Leeds—Grenville)
Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)	Brown (Barrie)
Bruinooge	Cadman
Calandra	Calkins
Cannan (Kelowna—Lake Country)	Cannon (Pontiac)
Carrie	Casson
Chong	Clarke
Clement	Cummins
Davidson	Dechert
Del Mastro	Devolin
Dreeshen	Duncan (Vancouver Island North)
Dykstra	Fast

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the amendment to the amendment carried.

● (1820)

[English]

The next question is on the amendment, as amended.

Hon. Gordon O'Connor: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. If you seek it, I believe you will find agreement to apply the vote from the previous motion to the current motion, with the Conservatives voting no.**The Speaker:** Is there unanimous consent to proceed in this way?**Some hon. members:** Agreed.**Mr. Rodger Cuzner:** Mr. Speaker, the Liberals will be voting in favour of this motion.

[Translation]

Mr. Michel Guimond: Mr. Speaker, the members of the Bloc Québécois will be supporting this amendment.**Mr. Yvon Godin:** Mr. Speaker, the members of the NDP will be voting in favour of this motion.

Private Members' Business

Mr. André Arthur: Mr. Speaker, I will be voting against this motion.

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

*(Division No. 63)***YEAS**

Members

Allen (Welland)	André
Andrews	Angus
Ashton	Asselin
Bachand	Bagnell
Bains	Beaudin
Bélangier	Bellavance
Bennett	Bevilacqua
Bevington	Bigras
Blais	Bonsant
Bouchard	Bourgeois
Brisson	Brunelle
Byrne	Cannis
Cardin	Carrier
Charlton	Chow
Christopherson	Coady
Coderre	Comartin
Cotler	Crombie
Crowder	Cuzner
D'Amours	Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)
Davies (Vancouver East)	DeBellefeuille
Demers	Deschamps
Desnoyers	Dewar
Dhaliwal	Dion
Dorion	Dosanjh
Duceppe	Dufour
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)
Easter	Eyking
Faille	Folco
Foote	Fry
Garneau	Godin
Gravelle	Guarnieri
Guay	Guimond (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques)
Guimond (Montmorency—Charlevoix—Haute-Côte-Nord)	
Hall Findlay	
Harris (St. John's East)	Holland
Hughes	Hyer
Jennings	Julian
Kania	Karygiannis
Laframboise	Lalonde
Lavallée	Layton
LeBlanc	Lee
Lemay	Leslie
Lessard	Lévesque
MacAulay	Malhi
Malo	Maloway
Marston	Martin (Winnipeg Centre)
Martin (Sault Ste. Marie)	Masse
Mathysen	McCallum
McGuinity	McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
McTeague	Ménard (Hochelaga)
Ménard (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin)	Mendes
Minna	Mulcair
Murphy (Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe)	Murphy (Charlottetown)
Murray	Nadeau
Neville	Oliphant
Ouellet	Pacetti
Paillé	Paquette
Patry	Pearson
Plamondon	Pomerleau
Proulx	Rae
Rafferty	Ratansi
Regan	Rodriguez
Rota	Roy
Russell	Savage
Savoie	Sgro
Siksay	Simms
St-Cyr	Stoffer
Szabo	Thi Lac
Thibeault	Tonks
Trudeau	Valeriotte

Vincent
Wasylycia-Leis
Wrzesniewskij

Volpe
Wilfert
Zarac — 144

NAYS

Members

Abbott	Ablonczy
Aglukkaq	Albrecht
Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)	Allison
Ambrose	Anders
Anderson	Arthur
Ashfield	Baird
Benoit	Bernier
Blackburn	Blaney
Block	Boucher
Boughen	Braid
Breitkreuz	Brown (Leeds—Grenville)
Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)	Brown (Barrie)
Bruinooge	Cadman
Calandra	Calkins
Cannan (Kelowna—Lake Country)	Cannon (Pontiac)
Carrie	Casson
Chong	Clarke
Clement	Cummins
Davidson	Dechert
Del Mastro	Devoilin
Dreeshen	Duncan (Vancouver Island North)
Dykstra	Fast
Finley	Flaherty
Fletcher	Galipeau
Gallant	Glover
Goldring	Goodyear
Gourde	Grewal
Guergis	Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)
Hawn	Hiebert
Hill	Hoback
Hoepfner	Holder
Jean	Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)	Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Kent	Kerr
Komarnicki	Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
Lake	Lauzon
Lebel	Lemieux
Lobb	Lukiwski
Lunn	Lunney
MacKay (Central Nova)	MacKenzie
Mark	Mayes
McColeman	McLeod
Menzies	Merrifield
Miller	Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)
Moore (Fundy Royal)	Nicholson
Norlock	O'Connor
O'Neill-Gordon	Oda
Paradis	Payne
Petit	Poilievre
Prentice	Preston
Raitt	Rajotte
Rathgeber	Reid
Richards	Richardson
Rickford	Ritz
Saxton	Scheer
Schellenberger	Shea
Shipley	Shory
Smith	Sorenson
Stanton	Storseth
Strahl	Sweet
Thompson	Tilson
Toews	Trost
Tweed	Uppal
Van Kesteren	Van Loan
Vellacott	Verner
Wallace	Warawa
Warkentin	Watson
Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country)	
Weston (Saint John)	
Wong	Woodworth
Yelich	Young — 140

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the amendment carried.

The next question is on the main motion, as amended. 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 Chair: All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Chair: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Chair: In my opinion, the yeas have it.

And five or more members having risen:

• (1830)

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

(Division No. 64)

YEAS

Members

Allen (Welland)	André
Andrews	Angus
Ashton	Asselin
Bachand	Bagnell
Bains	Beaudin
Bélanger	Bellavance
Bennett	Bevilacqua
Bevington	Bigras
Blais	Bonsant
Bouchard	Bourgeois
Brison	Brunelle
Byrne	Cannis
Cardin	Carrier
Charlton	Chow
Christopherson	Coady
Coderre	Comartin
Cotler	Crombie
Crowder	Cuzner
D'Amours	Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)
Davies (Vancouver East)	DeBellefeuille
Demers	Deschamps
Desnoyers	Dewar
Dhaliwal	Dion
Dorion	Dosanjh
Duceppe	Dufour
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)
Easter	Eyking
Faille	Folco
Foote	Fry
Garneau	Godin
Gravelle	Guarnieri
Guay	Guimond (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les
Basques)	
Guimond (Montmorency—Charlevoix—Haute-Côte-Nord)	
Hall Findlay	
Harris (St. John's East)	Holland
Hughes	Hyer
Jennings	Julian
Kania	Karygiannis
Laframboise	Lalonde
Lavallée	Layton
LeBlanc	Lee
Lemay	Leslie
Lessard	Lévesque
MacAulay	Malhi
Malo	Maloway
Marston	Martin (Winnipeg Centre)
Martin (Sault Ste. Marie)	Masse
Mathysse	McCallum

McGuity
McTeague
Ménard (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin)
Minna
Murphy (Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe)
Murray
Neville
Ouellet
Paillé
Patry
Plamondon
Proulx
Rafferty
Regan
Rota
Russell
Savoie
Siksay
St-Cyr
Szabo
Thibeault
Trudeau
Vincent
Wasylycia-Leis
Wrzesnewskyj

Private Members' Business

McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
Ménard (Hochelaga)
Mendes
Mulcair
Murphy (Charlottetown)
Nadeau
Oliphant
Pacetti
Paquette
Pearson
Pomerleau
Rac
Ratansi
Rodriguez
Roy
Savage
Sgro
Simms
Stoffer
Thi Lac
Tonks
Valeriote
Volpe
Wilfert
Zarac — 144

NAYS

Members

Abbott	Ablonezy
Aglukkaq	Albrecht
Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)	Allison
Ambrose	Anders
Anderson	Arthur
Ashfield	Baird
Benoit	Bernier
Blackburn	Blaney
Block	Boucher
Boughen	Braid
Breitkreuz	Brown (Leeds—Grenville)
Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)	Brown (Barrie)
Bruinooge	Cadman
Calandra	Calkins
Cannan (Kelowna—Lake Country)	Cannon (Pontiac)
Carrie	Casson
Chong	Clarke
Clement	Cummins
Davidson	Dechert
Del Mastro	Devolin
Dreeshen	Duncan (Vancouver Island North)
Dykstra	Fast
Finley	Flaherty
Fletcher	Galipeau
Gallant	Glover
Goldring	Goodyear
Gourde	Grewal
Guergis	Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)
Hawn	Hiebert
Hill	Hoback
Hoepfner	Holder
Jean	Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)	Kennedy (Calgary Southeast)
Kent	Kerr
Komarnicki	Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
Lake	Lauzon
Lebel	Lemieux
Lobb	Lukiwski
Lunn	Lunney
MacKay (Central Nova)	MacKenzie
Mark	Mayes
McColeman	McLeod
Menzies	Merrifield
Miller	Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)
Moore (Fundy Royal)	Nicholson
Norlock	O'Connor
O'Neill-Gordon	Oda
Paradis	Payne
Petit	Poilievre
Prentice	Preston
Raiitt	Rajotte
Rathgeber	Reid
Richards	Richardson
Rickford	Ritz

Private Members' Business

Saxton	Scheer
Schellenberger	Shea
Shiple	Shory
Smith	Sorenson
Stanton	Storseth
Strahl	Sweet
Thompson	Tilson
Toews	Trost
Tweed	Uppal
Van Kesteren	Van Loan
Vellacott	Verner
Wallace	Warawa
Warkentin	Watson
Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country)	
Weston (Saint John)	
Wong	Woodworth
Yelich	Young— 140

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion, as amended, carried.

[*English*]

It being 6:30 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's order paper.

* * *

RENEWABLE ENERGY

Hon. Stéphane Dion (Saint-Laurent—Cartierville, Lib.) moved:

That, in the opinion of the House, the government should increase its support of Canada's renewable energy sector, allow our country to participate in the worldwide effort to develop renewable energy sources and enlist Canada as a full member of the International Renewable Energy Agency.

He said: Mr. Speaker, the International Renewable Energy Agency, IRENA, came into being on January 26, 2009. The founding conference in Bonn, Germany was attended by more than 120 government delegations from around the world. The Government of Canada sent no representative or observer.

As of today, 78 nations have signed the agency's statute. Many others have expressed their strong commitment to IRENA's goals and their intention to join in the near future. Until now, the Government of Canada has not signalled its intention.

[*Translation*]

We certainly wonder why. Why would the government snub this international agency? It makes no sense. The motion I have the honour of presenting offers the House of Commons an opportunity to commit the government to enlisting Canada as a full member of the International Renewable Energy Agency. It should be a given that Canada would be a member of this new agency. This country has always had a policy of making its mark in international forums when there is an important issue at stake.

This country is one of the pioneers that have worked to shape the most vital international institutions and that have used those institutions wisely to solve major problems.

And so the international community expects that Canada will be there, at a time when it is crucial that the world work together to deploy renewable energies and green technologies for the common good, especially since this is a field in which Canada has vast

experience and one that will, moreover, provide Canada with valuable economic benefits if it takes its place on the global market.

There can no longer be any doubt: renewable energy sources like solar energy, wind energy and geothermal energy are increasingly becoming strategic assets. There are at least three reasons for this.

The first is environmental. We must promote clean energy to reduce the pollution caused by smog, acid rain and emissions of toxic substances like mercury.

We have to protect our health, our environment and our biodiversity. It is urgent that we adopt these energy sources, which do not emit greenhouse gases, if we are to address the climate change crisis.

The second reason why it is urgent that we expand our use of renewable energy comes under the heading of energy security. Non-renewable energy sources, by definition, are going to run out. They are non-renewable.

One factor is that the global demand for energy will nearly triple by the year 2050. Another is, as we are aware, that known hydrocarbon reserves that are commercially viable using today's technologies are running out. The world is going to run short of recoverable carbon within a century and of readily accessible uranium in 40 years, and while there is no oil shortage at the moment, oil that is cheap to extract is becoming scarcer.

When a resource is expected to become scarce in the foreseeable future, then buyers and sellers anticipate supply problems and this is reflected in prices or costs.

When the global economy recovers, how high will the cost of a barrel of oil go? As high as \$150, as it did last summer? Or higher?

The Saudi oil minister is predicting a disastrous shortage and skyrocketing prices. The International Monetary Fund also foresees a sharp rise in the price of crude oil.

Using renewable energy is an economic necessity. It is vital to global energy security.

The third reason why we have to speed up a massive switch to renewable energy is fairness.

At present, more than 1.6 billion human beings, nearly a third of humanity, are living without electricity.

● (1835)

[*English*]

It is no surprise that the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development has identified access to renewable and clean energy as a prerequisite for achieving the millennium development goals for poverty eradication.

The good news is that the use of renewable energy is actually booming. Wind and solar power are the fastest growing energy sources. According to the United Nations Environmental Program, global investment in renewable energy reached almost \$150 billion in 2007 and is expected to increase to \$600 billion by 2020. This is encouraging.

Private Members' Business

However, we will need much more within a short period of time, and the consensus is that it cannot be done without immense international co-operation.

This is why IRENA was created. IRENA is poised to become a key international institution, the role of which will be to act as an international governmental institution, focusing on the promotion of renewable energy and welcoming all UN members to join it. Its main tasks are to provide relevant policy advice and assistance to its members upon their request, improve pertinent knowledge and technology transfer and promote the development of local capacity in member states.

Right now no existing international organization can fulfill this mandate with the desired level of commitment and expertise. This is why so many important world players have welcomed the foundation of IRENA and are eager to unleash the opportunities for development and co-operation that this organization will provide. Here are a few quotes.

Dr. Pachauri, chairman of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and Director General of the Energy and Resources Institute, said, "IRENA is a very important development for the mitigation of greenhouse gases and sustainable development".

Mohamed El-Ashry, chair of the Renewable Energy Policy Network for the 21st Century stated, "IRENA promises to become a major driving force in advancing a rapid transition towards RE on a global scale".

Dr. Eric Martinot, research director for the Institute for Sustainable Energy Policies said:

IRENA can...provide policy guidance to governments around the world. In addition, the enormous need for technology development and education among all countries - both developed and developing - means that more coherent international efforts are absolutely necessary.

The prospect for synergy and co-operation is particularly promising with the International Energy Agency: first, because IRENA concentrates solely on renewable energy, while the International Energy Agency covers all energy sources with an emphasis on fossil and nuclear sources; and second, because IRENA is open to all United Nations members, industrialized and developing countries alike, while the International Energy Agency is limited to OECD countries.

• (1840)

[*Translation*]

And this brings us back to Canada's inexplicable absence. It is now essential that the government allow this country to play its proper role, to be a leader, not a roadblock, in the speedy adoption of renewable energy around the world.

[*English*]

Canada cannot sit on the sidelines. Our country must be a leader in the international co-operation movement toward the much needed massive deployment of renewable energy.

What does the government have to lose by allowing Canada to be a full member of IRENA?

[*Translation*]

The more we do at home, the more we do elsewhere in the world. In terms of international aid, it is a fact that the most generous countries are also the ones most actively engaged in combating poverty at home. The same is true for renewable energy. Germany, Denmark and Spain, three leaders in renewable energy, are the ones most actively promoting IRENA. The United Arab Emirates, one of the oil-producing countries most active in promoting renewable energy, has tossed its hat into the ring as a candidate to host the headquarters of the new agency.

This kind of interest also shows the economic potential that renewable resources offer for countries that champion this cause early on. What has the Conservative government done to promote renewable energy? Considerably less than the minimum needed.

[*English*]

After three years of Conservative inaction, there is still no cap and trade system in Canada, which would level the playing field and make renewable energy more competitive with fossil fuels.

The Conservatives were quick to kill the plan of the previous Liberal government. They have yet to replace it with something other than idle talk and delaying tactics. Not once did the Conservative budget mention the words renewable energy.

According to the Pembina Institute, only 5% of the stimulus spending plan for the next two years is directed at clean energy. The Conservatives want to spend much, if not all, of their five year so-called clean energy fund on carbon capture and storage. The government declined to expand eco-energy, its modest program to support wind, solar, geothermal and other forms of renewable energy.

Does that explain the government's refusal to join the 78 IRENA member countries? Is the government afraid to be seen once more as an environmental and innovation laggard?

It is clear that we need to accelerate the growth of Canada's renewable energy industry and maximize the economic and environmental benefits that will result from it, especially in terms of green jobs.

Our international competitors are already engaged in meaningful economic stimulus through innovative green initiatives. President Obama's stimulus package, for example, includes plans to double the production of renewable energy in the next three years. Japan has plans to create one million additional green manufacturing jobs. Last week, China pledged to generate 100 gigawatts of electricity from wind power by 2020.

If we do not change course, Canada will fall behind.

To develop the production and use of renewable energy at home and abroad, the government should begin with two simple initiatives: in Canada, expand the eco-energy for renewable power program; and abroad, enlist Canada as a full member of IRENA.

Private Members' Business

These simple gestures would signal that the government is starting to realize the potential of Canada's renewable energy sector, the amount of green jobs and sustainable economic opportunities that are at stake and the pressing need for global co-operation in this crucial area.

• (1845)

[*Translation*]

It is never too late to do the right thing. I am offering the government an opportunity to do so, with the motion I have the honour of presenting. I urge all members of this House to support this motion, which calls on the government to increase its support of Canada's renewable energy sector and allow Canada to participate as a full member of the International Renewable Energy Agency.

[*English*]

Hon. Scott Brison (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his private member's motion. It is important that we realize the importance of greening the Canadian economy, as we see other countries move forward.

It was not that long ago that Americans used to look north to Canada and were inspired by the fact that the government was pursuing its international responsibilities around the environment and climate change, and they were embarrassed of their government. Now Canadians are looking south to the Obama administration and seeing a budget and a stimulus package that is extraordinarily green, that is investing in renewable energy, in clean energy, in smart grid and all the infrastructure we need to move forward.

My question for the hon. member is around the role of government and government procurement, particularly. Government represents a big part of the Canadian economy. How can governments help lead by example in terms of what we buy, how we heat and renovate our buildings and how we consume goods and services?

Hon. Stéphane Dion: Madam Speaker, I remember the Liberal plan of the last government, which the Conservatives killed. We had a plan to cut the emission of greenhouse gases of our own government activities by a third by 2012.

We need to have a commitment. We need to have a target. Canadians need to know that the target exists, and it needs to be delivered. The government is one of the biggest employers in Canada, a leader. Every moment we decide to focus on green technologies, green solutions for our buildings and our activities, it will have a tremendous effect on the Canadian economy.

This is something that we must do. The government must have a clear target and should deliver it over the years.

Mr. Mark Warawa (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC): Madam Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member across the way for his commitment to the environment. He just shared with the House the importance of setting a target and then being committed to delivering that.

The member was the environment minister for a while and the leader of the Liberal Party. Why did the emissions go way above the target? The commitment of the previous government was 6% below 1990 levels, but the targets went 35% above that target. Emissions continued to grow.

Does he still support the job-killing carbon tax that he proposed in the last election?

Hon. Stéphane Dion: Madam Speaker, as one of the champions of the environment, why is his government coming in with this rhetoric? That does not make sense in any environmental network in the world.

We all agree that when we are committed to climate change, we take it seriously. We need to put a price on greenhouse gas emissions. As long as it is free, our atmosphere will remain like a garbage disposal. There is no way we will see emissions go down. We need to put a price on greenhouse gas emissions.

The Liberal government had a commitment to a cap and trade system. Why did the Conservatives kill the Liberal plan for that system? The regulations were done. The last thing I did, before my government left in December 2005, was to start the process to regulate emissions.

Mr. Obama just announced some weeks ago that the United States would regulate greenhouse gas emissions as a pollutant. We did it three years ago. What have the Conservatives done since then? Nothing. We are still waiting for their plan. Canada has no price on greenhouse gas emissions through a cap and trade or a carbon tax. That is why emissions are going up. They are doing nothing.

• (1850)

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, the government seems to be following the old U.S. policies.

Could the member tell the government that George Bush is no longer in power? We should forget arguing about the past and move forward on a good idea and a good resolution from the member.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Denise Savoie): The hon. member has only 20 seconds for his reply.

[*English*]

Hon. Stéphane Dion: Madam Speaker, I feel we need to explain why we debate this. It is so obvious that Canada should be a champion of the new international organization, which may become one of the key ones of the 21st century. Why is Canada not there? Because the government seems to have a commitment for isolation in the world, which is similar to what President Bush was doing two years ago.

Mr. Bradley Trost (Saskatoon—Humboldt, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am grateful for the opportunity to speak to this motion, presented to the House by the hon. member for Saint-Laurent—Cartierville.

We need to be strategic and prudent in our decisions about how to invest most effectively in the development of renewable energy both at home and abroad. The agency that the hon. member proposes we join, the International Renewable Energy Agency, or IRENA, has programs with the potential to duplicate others that Canada is already a part of.

Private Members' Business

Canada is already a major player in the international effort to develop renewable energy sources. It is a member of the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Partnership, or REEEP, which is funded by Canada and other governments such as Australia, Austria, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Spain, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, the United States and the European Union.

Canada already belongs to and financially supports the Global Bioenergy Partnership, which currently has 25 international members and an additional 21 participating observer nations and organizations. Canada belongs to and supports the Asia-Pacific Partnership on Clean Development and Climate along with Australia, China, India, Japan, Korea and the United States.

It also belongs to the International Energy Agency, with 28 member countries. The IEA pursues a number of renewable and clean energy initiatives in its overall work program. Moreover, Canada participates in eight IEA implementing agreements. Specifically, they are bioenergy, ocean energy, photovoltaics, renewable technologies, solar, wind and hydropower. These provide concrete and practical examples of leveraging tight resources and advancing renewable technologies.

In addition, organizations to which Canada has been a long-standing member, such as the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, Energy Working Group and the United Nations Environment Programme, have also increased their activities on renewable energy.

There are a number of reasons why Canada did not join the International Renewable Energy Agency being promoted by the hon. member. The hon. member knows well that much has evolved in this field since IRENA was first proposed in 2004. There have been many initiatives and Canada is participating in those where we see value added for Canada. There is now a real risk of duplication and the overlapping of programs with IRENA being added to the long list of organizations that Canada is already active in.

Moreover, Canada supports an integrated approach to energy issues. It does not advocate creating or spinning off organizations focused on specific elements of a much larger picture as IRENA does. Canada's preferred approach is to continue our engagement with renewable energy initiatives within organizations to which we already belong. We believe in doing our part to make the integrated approach of these organizations as effective as possible, not joining new organizations with new assessed annual contributions, regional offices and secretariats. More is not always better.

We are not alone in this view. I would like to point out that key G8 partners, specifically countries such as the United States, Japan and Russia, have not joined IRENA. Significant emerging economies such as Brazil and China have not joined IRENA either. The motion before us also proposes greater investment here at home in Canada's renewable energy sector. This government has invested in renewable energy strategically in ways that leverage and optimize the effectiveness of public investments, as we have in our other priorities of importance to Canadians.

Energy is the backbone of Canada's economy. Its production has long contributed to the quality of life of Canadians and it will do so in the future. Before the current economic downturn, the energy production of our country alone approached \$100 billion annually.

● (1855)

Canada, with its large land mass and diversified geography, has substantial renewable resources that can be used to produce energy. These resources include: moving water, biomass, wind, solar, geothermal and ocean energy. Canada is a world leader in the production and use of energy from renewable resources.

The Government of Canada's eco-energy initiatives have been very successful, especially in the area of renewable energy. The eco-energy for renewable power program is investing nearly \$1.5 billion to develop clean renewable energy sources. To date, this program has committed about \$934 million, representing over 2,884 megawatts of clean renewable electricity.

There is still \$498 million to be allocated through eco-energy for renewable power, with numerous applications still being considered. It is our expectation that this initiative will produce 14.3 terawatt hours of new electricity from renewable sources.

To further support Canada's leadership in clean energy, budget 2009 provides \$1 billion over five years to support clean technologies. This includes \$150 million over five years for research, \$850 million over five years for the development and demonstration of promising technologies, including large-scale carbon capture and storage projects. This support is expected to generate a total investment in clean technologies of at least \$2.5 billion over the next five years.

In closing, it is clear that there is no compelling reason why Canada should join yet another international body committed to the development of renewable energies. The Government of Canada is maximizing successful investments already made among other priorities of importance to Canadians. This government is getting the job done.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Paule Brunelle (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise today in the House to debate Motion No. 295 from the hon. member for Saint-Laurent—Cartierville on renewable energy and Canada's participation, or rather lack of it, in the International Renewable Energy Agency, or IRENA.

The motion divides into two specific points. First, that the government should increase its support of Canada's renewable energy sector. Second, that the government should allow Canada to participate in the worldwide effort to develop renewable energy sources and enlist Canada as a full member of the International Renewable Energy Agency.

Private Members' Business

The Bloc Québécois is in favour of this motion. Indeed, any measure or initiative that would enable Quebec to reduce its oil dependency will be encouraged by the Bloc Québécois, no matter whom it comes from.

Because our nation is so greatly concerned by the issue of climate change, in large part because of our dependency on non-renewable fossil fuels.

Because the Quebec nation is highly attuned to sustainable economic development issues and committed to protecting the environment by every means possible.

And as long as Quebec is not a nation free to make its own economic and environmental choices, we must support federal measures which will provide better support to the Quebec renewable energy sector.

And as long as Quebec cannot determine all its own economic and environmental policies, we will have to suffer because of Canada's poor record in the fight against climate change, a Liberal as well as Conservative legacy.

And until we are a sovereign state that can make good use of its ecological advantage compared to the rest of Canada, we will support motions such as the one introduced by our colleague from Saint-Laurent—Cartierville.

Canada's environmental record gets worse by the day. Instead of decreasing, fossil fuel consumption is rising steadily, and production is going up as well. The Conservative government takes pride in that. We are concerned, though.

With the Liberals, we had a government that did promote the Kyoto protocol, but did absolutely nothing to comply with it. Greenhouse gas emissions rose by nearly 22% between 1990 and 2006, even though the Kyoto target was a 6% reduction compared to 1990 levels.

My colleague from Saint-Laurent—Cartierville was even the environment minister when the Liberals were in power. His record speaks for itself: fine words and good intentions, but in practical terms, we are very far from the targets Canada supported.

The current situation cannot go on indefinitely without having a serious impact not only on our energy future, but on our future, period. We need to be part of the solution, not part of the problem.

Quebec is part of the solution. Forty per cent of all the energy used in Quebec, which includes transportation, is electric and hydro-electric energy, which is clean and renewable. In Ontario, 40% of electricity is generated using nuclear power.

In Quebec, 0.9% of electricity is produced from coal. In Ontario, the figure is 23%.

Quebec has a vested interest in taking an active role in developing renewable energy, because we have expertise in this area and a desire to excel.

For example, when the electric car becomes the norm, Quebec will be richer, because every dollar spent on gas in Quebec is a dollar exported.

We have no interest in seeing the current situation continue.

In the end, Alberta will find itself with an economy based on the most environmentally destructive form of energy production in the world: oil sands development.

California, a market of over 30 million people, is about to ban this source of oil.

With the oil sands development in Alberta, Canada has become a major player in the oil market.

Its natural resources minister has become the head lobbyist for this industry, going so far as to threaten to retaliate against our trading partners if they ban this dirty oil from their countries. That episode says a lot about how interested the Conservative government really is in the environment.

The Bloc Québécois has suggested several ways to reduce our dependency on oil and shift the emphasis to renewable energy.

● (1900)

First, we need to move quickly to give Hydro-Québec some leeway by increasing the energy efficiency of homes by 18% and reducing consumption by 15% over 10 years.

Second, we should continue to abandon the use of fuel oil in homes, businesses and industries by cutting the number of homes heating with it by half over 10 years and reducing the amount industry uses by 45%.

Third, we should stop the increases in the amount of fuel used for the long distance transportation of goods by freezing the volume of trucking at its current level and relying on technological improvements to obtain a 9% reduction in the amount of fuel used for transportation of this kind.

Fourth, we should reduce the amount of fuel used to transport people by stopping the increases in the number of automobiles on the roads and encouraging a 40% increase in the use of public transit, a 20% decrease in the amount of fuel used by private vehicles, and a 30% decrease in the amount used by commercial and institutional fleets.

Fifth, we should reduce the oil content of the fuels we use. We have almost no bio-fuels, despite their potential. The amount consumed in Quebec as a whole should be reduced by 5%.

Sixth, Quebec is in the vanguard of certain energy and clean transportation technologies and we should make it an energy and clean transportation hub by increasing our investments in research and development and encouraging the emergency of technology centres.

Quebec is certainly contributing its fair share to the development of clean, renewable energies. Until we are a sovereign country, the federal government has a role to play, especially in regard to federal expenditures on research and development to meet our needs and build up a critical mass of knowledge in cutting-edge fields.

Private Members' Business

The first point raised in my colleague's motion M-295 is that the government should increase its support for the renewable energy sector in Canada. However, the Conservatives do the opposite and confine themselves to a vision straight out of the last century by lending unwavering support to the oil and nuclear industries. In the view of this government, oil has become a clean energy because, according to its plans, we will soon be able to bury the fantastic amounts of carbon produced by the big oil companies under the ground.

This carbon capture and storage technology is basically funded by the taxpayers of Quebec and Canada. In its last budget, the government boasted it had provided more than \$375 million in 2006 for the development of this technology. This taxpayer money is being sent directly to the biggest polluters on the continent.

The government's arrogance does not stop there. On page 179 of the budget, the government says it wants to further support Canada's leadership in clean energy by providing \$1 billion over five years to support clean energy technologies. This claim is a total farce. Of the \$1 billion, \$650 million will go straight to funding concrete applications of big carbon capture and storage projects.

We could continue at length on the problems with the ecoENERGY program and the lack of much effort by the federal government to help reduce greenhouse gases, but we will stop there. This is a debate that is only beginning.

I want to congratulate my colleague from Saint-Laurent—Cartierville for giving us this opportunity to debate together.

● (1905)

[English]

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am fully in favour of the motion put forward by the hon. member for Saint-Laurent—Cartierville.

Based on what we have heard from the government today on this motion, I have to say that the government simply does not get it. Clean energy, clean electricity is not synonymous with renewable power. It is incumbent upon the government to understand the difference and to understand why it is important to embrace renewable energy and embrace a membership in IRENA.

I can give three simple examples of where the government just does not get it. The first is the 2009 budget. The second is the 2008 fall economic update. The third is turning the corner. If we go back and turn the corner, we will understand what happened in the fall economic update and what happened in the budget. It is the same message throughout. The government's definition of clean electricity in all three documents does not include the words renewable power anywhere. The government just does not understand what it is.

The government's definition of clean energy is "clean coal", which no government in this nation has committed to fully. However, to its credit, the Alberta government is ahead of everyone else in the country. The Conservatives do not understand what the rest of the world is embracing and we are losing our competitive edge.

I absolutely support the motion put forward by the hon. member. It is not even enough that we join IRENA. We need to step up to the plate. It is one thing for the government to say that it cannot take

action on climate change because Canada will be at an economic disadvantage but it is another thing when it says that Canada will not join IRENA and give assistance to developing nations in transfer technology and help them ensure their energy supply is clean. That would be far too consistent.

The government gave a major economic hit to renewables in the budget. Sure, money was provided previously, but a lot of it was provided through the historic NDP 2005 budget. Sure, money was previously given by the government toward renewables. In fact, the program was so popular it was oversubscribed. However, the government cut that program to the quick. There is no new money for renewables. It has slammed the door in the face of a burgeoning Canadian energy sector. It does not want renewable power in Canada. It would be perfectly happy if that whole industry were to move to the United States and all the investment came from Europe. The government does not want to build our renewable industry in Canada.

What did President Obama do in the first month that he was elected? He gave a three year extension in tax credits to wind power, solar power and other revenue producers. He gave tax credits to investors in renewable energy and grants to producers who could not benefit from the tax credits. He provided \$4.5 billion in loans and grants for smart grid. Why is that significant? It is because in order to bring renewable energy on stream, smart grid is needed. The U.S. simply cannot tie in to the massive grids that we support in Canada. Money was also given to energy manufacturers as an incentive for supply renewable energy.

The Prime Minister's budget and policies are completely contrary to American policies and contrary to what we are told day after day by the hon. Minister of the Environment. Every week he tells us that he has met again with the Americans in our Canada-U.S. dialogue on energy security and climate change and says that he is in harmony. Nothing could be further from the truth.

The Conservative government has refused to give its support to renewables, while President Obama is embracing the renewable sector and understands what the Europeans are saying. He also understands what the International Energy Agency is saying, which the member across the floor proudly espouses. Even that agency, which premises most of its work on fossil fuels, says that it is time to shift to investing in renewables. It says that it is time to get off the fossil fuel bandwagon if countries want to remain competitive.

● (1910)

I do not see harmonization in our energy and climate change policies. On the contrary, we refuse to join IRENA. We refuse to take action on climate change. We refuse to invest in renewable power.

Private Members' Business

To my regret, the hon. member voted in favour of that budget. I am happy he has come forward with this motion. It is showing clearly that he thinks the government should be shifting in a different direction. We need to be altering this budget. We need to be putting money back into renewables, including support for lesser developed nations.

In March of this year, contrary to what we were told by the hon. Minister of the Environment, the United States moved forward in actually enacting legislation in support of renewables. Just this past month, the United States tabled the American clean energy and security act of 2009. That was put forward to the public for discussion before they tabled the bill. Imagine that. The Americans opened up to the U.S. public and asked what they thought of their innovation and proposed investment and regulatory measures in favour of renewables. That was tabled by the chair of the U.S. energy and commerce committee and the chair of the subcommittee on energy and environment. Clearly, their energy and environment agencies are coming together and embracing renewables.

The release of that act is laudable, for two reasons. One is the transparency of the process, the reaching out to Americans and asking what they think of the proposal. Is it going far enough? Are we going in the right direction with our climate change and energy policy?

Second, the Americans are taking legislative action. Not only are they endorsing the move toward investment and renewables, they are actually imposing legislative requirements and measures to incent renewables. That includes a legally binding renewable electricity standard requiring all retail electricity suppliers with annual sales over a million megawatts per hour to supply 25% of electricity from renewable sources by 2025. Would it not be nice if we saw our federal government doing the same?

These measures will provide cleaner air, reduced pollution and security of supply for the United States, which wants to get off its reliance on fossil fuels. We see leadership in the United States, the political will to legislate and to bring forward renewables.

A second legislative measure that was just announced by the United States is new regulations by the United States Environmental Protection Agency for ethanol. It is a renewable fuel standard requiring 20% reduction in emissions of greenhouse gases when they produce ethanol. What is Canada's response? It is incenting more use of ethanol but no requirement to reduce the greenhouse gases in production. Does that sound like harmonization in energy and climate change policy? It is far from the truth. It is completely contrary.

Where is the action by the government? Surely the government has been briefed on these measures. The Minister of the Environment has repeatedly advised the House that this government's policies are moving in tandem with the United States, that the Canada-U.S. dialogue is going well.

Where are the long-awaited, long-promised air pollution standards? Why the delay? Where are the long-awaited, long-promised legally binding rules for greenhouse gases? Why did the government strike this blow to the Canadian renewable energy sector just when it was burgeoning and could be competitive? Why is the government

ignoring the advice of leading international agencies, including the International Energy Agency, and all of the leading agencies of the western world, most of which are embracing the International Renewable Energy Agency?

Will the government remove its blinders and seek briefings by knowledgeable, independent experts on the renewable energy sector? Will the government truly turn the corner and revise its budget and strategy on achieving cleaner electricity and addressing climate change to support this country's renewable energy sector?

With our economy suffering, including the fossil fuel industry, why is the government deserting this sector for the future? European investors are reported to be shifting their investments to the U.S. renewable sector. Our companies will lose out. Will the government step up to the plate and support competitiveness of Canada's renewable sector? Will it step forward and at least join IRENA and support the lesser developed nations of the world that are trying to move forward as well in addressing climate change?

• (1915)

Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.): Madam Speaker, today I rise in the House in support of the private member's motion to increase support for Canada's renewable energy sector and to enlist Canada as a full member of the International Renewable Energy Agency, or IRENA.

Leading entrepreneurs, scientists and thinkers identify the greatest challenges facing humanity over the next 50 years as producing renewable energy, reprogramming genes to prevent disease, and reversing the signs of aging.

They describe sunshine as a tantalizing source of environmentally friendly power, bathing the Earth with more energy each hour than the planet's population consumes in a year, and they identify the challenge, namely capturing one part in 10,000 of the sunlight that falls on the Earth to meet 100% of our energy needs, converting it into something useful and then storing it.

Solving the clean energy challenge will change the world but it will not be met without economic and political will, as cheap, polluting technologies are often preferred over more expensive, renewable technologies, despite environmental regulations.

Humanity is, however, up to this challenge, as shown by financial and political investment, for example, in President Kennedy's tremendous vision in 1961. He said:

[T]his nation should commit itself to achieving the goal, before this decade is out, of landing a man on the moon and returning him safely to the earth. No single space project in this period will be more impressive to mankind, or more important for the long-range exploration of space; and none will be so difficult or expensive to accomplish.... But in a very real sense, it will not be one man going to the moon—if we make this judgment affirmatively, it will be an entire nation.

Private Members' Business

Closer to home the channel tunnel, or Chunnel, first proposed in 1802, cost \$15 billion, took seven years and 13,000 workers to link England and France in 1994. The CN Tower, which dominates Toronto's skyline, was constructed over 40 months to improve telecommunications problems resulting from a construction boom in the 1960s.

Today we need new vision, or in the words of James Collins, a "big, hairy, audacious goal", a renewable energy goal that stimulates progress and leads to continuous improvement, innovation and renewal. We need tangible targets such as Amazon's "every book, ever printed in any language, all available in less than 60 seconds." We must economically and politically invest in renewable energy, as climate change is our most pressing environmental problem.

It is no longer a choice between saving our economy and saving our environment. Today it is a choice between prosperity and decline. It is a choice between being a principal producer and consumer in the old economy or a leader in the new economy of renewable energy.

We must remember that the country that leads the world in creating new energy sources will be the nation that leads the 21st century global economy.

Failure to limit climate change to 2°C above pre-industrial levels will make it impossible to avoid potentially irreversible changes to the Earth's ability to sustain human development. We have a five-in-six chance of maintaining the 2°C limit if worldwide greenhouse gas emissions are reduced by 80% by 2050, relative to 1990.

In light of this science, there were 17 sessions on climate change under the theme, "The Shifting Power Equation", at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, this year. A total of 2,400 global leaders, including 800 CEOs, attended sessions on economics of climate change, making green pay, and the legal landscape around climate change, culminating with a plenary session entitled, "Climate Change: A Call to Action".

Clearly, global business leaders recognize that climate change is a serious economic and social challenge and that delaying mitigation will make future action more costly. They recognize that addressing climate change requires clear and honest communication regarding the challenge we face, that rich countries should take the lead in cutting greenhouse gas emissions, and that all countries must in fact take action.

● (1920)

Business leaders are therefore committed to addressing climate change and are already undertaking emission reduction strategies in their companies. More important, they support the Bali Action Plan and its work program to negotiate an international climate policy framework to succeed the Kyoto protocol and are ready to work with governments to help this happen.

There are numerous opportunities to mitigate and to adapt to climate change, from carbon capture and storage to cleaner diesel, to combined heat and power, to fossil fuel switching, to hybrid vehicles, to renewable energy, to name but a few mitigation technologies.

Different countries will pursue different combinations of policies and technologies to cut emissions. Canada, with its abundant supply of biomass, water and wind, must expand with government's help its renewable energy sector and commercialization of products and technologies over the coming years.

Industry Canada reports that it supports the development and demonstration of renewable energy technologies. It also conducts research to assess the economic opportunities that renewables create for Canada, as well as investment opportunities and the domestic manufacturing capacity to support the renewable energy industry.

Unprecedented multi-stakeholder collaboration is needed to link the climate and economic agendas. We need private-public collaboration of civil society, climate scientists, environmental economists and trade experts, all working with government.

In concrete terms, Canada needs to be part of the International Renewable Energy Agency, or IRENA, the first group, including 78 countries as of January 2009, designed to ensure the fast-emerging sector has a clear voice at next year's UN climate change negotiations.

The agency's goals include working with its members to improve the policy environment for the use of renewable energy, to engage in technology transfer, and to support capacity-building for renewable energy, goals very similar to those of Industry Canada.

Germany's environment minister argues that IRENA will help to promote the emerging sector at a time when the global economic downturn has caused fear that some capital-intensive alternative energy projects may find it difficult to attract funding.

In closing, our most daunting challenges are the global economic crisis and climate change. Humanity needs a climate change solution that is scientifically credible, economically viable and equitable, and Canada needs a plan that builds on its abundance of renewable energy sources with the support of IRENA.

Finally, we must heed the words of 12-year-old Severn Suzuki at the 1992 Rio Earth Summit, who was fighting for her future and who challenged us to fight for all future generations. She read:

Do not forget why you are attending...who you are doing this for. We are your own children. You are deciding what kind of world we are growing up in.

Parents should be able to comfort their children by saying "Everything's going to be all right. It's not the end of the world. And we're doing the best we can." But I don't think you can say that to us anymore.

Adjournment Proceedings

•(1925)

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Denise Savoie): Resuming debate.

The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development has perhaps three minutes to begin his comments and will be able to continue when the debate resumes.

Mr. Ed Komarnicki (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development and to the Minister of Labour, CPC): Madam Speaker, certainly, renewable energy is a large part of the Government of Canada's plan to address climate change.

We owe it to future generations to take action on climate change and to take that action now. That is why in early 2007 the Government of Canada announced its eco-energy initiatives to support the objective of reducing Canada's greenhouse gases by 20% by 2020.

At the same time, we have to balance the needs of our environment with the needs of our economy. Energy production is the backbone of Canada's economy. It has long contributed significantly to the quality of life of all Canadians.

Before the economic downturn, Canada's energy production was approximately \$100 billion annually. However, the reality is that energy production and use are also the sources of most of Canada's air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions.

The task at hand is twofold: to clean up the production and use of fossil fuels, and to increase the use of clean energy by helping Canadians use energy more efficiently, boost renewable energy supplies and develop cleaner energy technologies.

The \$3.6 billion eco-energy initiative that this government launched in 2007 provides a suite of programs designed to do just that. Our eco-energy programs are focusing on energy production, industry, business, transportation and, most importantly, homeowners. These programs have been tremendously successful, especially in the area of renewable energy.

I am pleased to have this opportunity to highlight a few examples. The eco-energy for renewable power program is investing nearly \$1.5 billion to develop clean renewable energy sources, such as wind, low-impact hydro, biomass, geothermal, solar, photovoltaic and ocean energy.

To date this program has committed \$934 million, representing over 2,884 megawatts of clean renewable electricity. This year we will see even greater success. There is still \$498 million that will be allocated by the eco-energy for renewable power program, and many of the applications are still being reviewed.

Ultimately, this initiative will encourage the production of 14.3 terawatt hours of new electricity from renewable energy sources. That is enough electricity to power about 1 million homes.

Through our eco-energy for renewable heat program, we are supporting the uptake of renewable energy by industry, business and institutions. It is extending the use of renewable energy for space heating and hot water.

Our government is also encouraging Canadians to install renewable energy technologies in their homes by providing eco-energy grants to homeowners for the installation of solar hot water systems, ground or water source heat pumps to ensure that as homeowners they can contribute to the bigger picture of what needs to happen.

•(1930)

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Denise Savoie): The time provided for the consideration of private members' business has now expired and the order is dropped to the bottom of the order of precedence on the order paper.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

[*Translation*]

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise this evening to take part in the adjournment debate.

On February 11, 2009, I asked the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development a question about the crisis situation facing people applying for employment insurance.

For several months now, we have known that many Canadians are experiencing this crisis situation. They are applying for employment insurance for one reason, and one reason only: they are losing their jobs. If they had not lost their jobs, they would not need to apply for EI. They could go on working and receiving a salary in order to support their families. The reality, however, is quite the opposite.

Indeed, people are losing their jobs and have had to wait up to 55 days to receive their first cheque. Not only must the department have all the necessary information, but the employer might need more time to provide the employee with the termination papers. The individual does not receive his or her first cheque until after that. In some cases, there is a 55-day wait, but quite often, up to 75 days can go by between when the individual loses his or job and when he or she receives the first cheque. Receiving your first cheque 75 days after losing your job must be very difficult.

Every day, many Canadians tell me that it would be interesting to see the members of the Conservative government, who do not understand what it is like, go through the EI application process. Of course, MPs are not entitled to EI. But if they were to do so, they would understand the reality facing most Canadian workers every day.

With a delay of 55 days, how can anyone keep a roof over their heads? An individual, just like a family, needs a roof over his head, whether it is an apartment, a room or a house.

Adjournment Proceedings

In rural areas, people need a means of transportation, such as a car. They also have to eat. That is the minimum for survival in this country. In winter, things get worse. They have to pay astronomical amounts to heat a residence, whether they use heating oil or electricity.

People have to wait 55 days for their first cheque. That means that many citizens have lost not only their jobs but also their accommodation and they can no longer feed themselves or their families. How do people survive? We want to boost the economy but how can these people do it if they cannot make purchases?

In reality, these people cannot keep their jobs, which are taken away from them, nor their homes, because they are evicted for lack of money. They cannot even buy food. This is not the 1930s, 1940s or 1950s, when we could go to the general store and put our purchases on account, and then pay for them when we received a cheque.

The fact is that waiting more than 55 days to receive one's first employment insurance cheque is unacceptable.

Why will this government not simply make things better so that people can continue to live with dignity and not be forced to keep begging for help from the federal government?

• (1935)

[English]

Mr. Ed Komarnicki (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development and to the Minister of Labour, CPC): Madam Speaker, the remarks of the member for Madawaska—Restigouche give me an opportunity to detail the many steps that our government has taken recently to help unemployed Canadians and their families during this difficult economic slowdown.

Obviously, there can be a number of reasons behind any delay, but we have taken a number of steps to mitigate delays. Losing a job is a particularly trying time for anyone. There is no question or doubt about that. Unfortunately, too many Canadians are going through that right now. That is why we have taken action to make sure that we are processing their EI claims just as fast as we can.

We recognize the increased need for processing capacity and to that end, we have acted and will continue to act to meet the needs of Canadians in this regard. To this effect, we have allocated an additional \$60 million for EI processing, including hiring additional staff in order to ensure Canadians who need help are getting it as soon as possible.

Beyond this, we have taken many steps to meet the increased demand. We have hired and trained additional employees and recalled recent retirees. Call centre agents are working overtime on a voluntary basis. Hours of services have been extended and workloads are being shared to accelerate the speed of payment and to ensure Canadians in all regions receive uniform service. We are also increasing the automation of the claims process.

Through these measures, we have processed significantly more claims this year than over the same time last year, and we continue to take action to meet increasing demand.

Through our economic action plan, we have invested an unprecedented \$8.3 billion in the Canada skills and transition strategy. This strategy will strengthen the benefits for Canadian workers, enhance the availability of training and keep EI premium rates frozen.

Never before has there been such a concerted effort to reach out and help Canadians. Among our many actions, we have extended the duration of EI benefits by expanding nationally a pilot project which already provided five extra weeks of EI benefits to EI claimants in areas of high unemployment. We have also increased the maximum duration of EI benefits available under the EI program from 45 to 50 weeks. Over 400,000 Canadians will benefit from these measures in the first year alone.

While we are pleased that the unprecedented stimulus measures we proposed in our economic action plan are now starting to take effect, we recognize that the challenges faced by those who have lost their jobs in this difficult time, through no fault of their own, is something that we need to help them with.

We will continue to monitor the effectiveness of these measures to make sure that the EI system is working and responding effectively to the evolving economic circumstances. We will do what we can to stay with those who need us at this time.

[Translation]

Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours: Madam Speaker, it is now May 2009. The crisis did not start yesterday or the day before. In my riding, the crisis started over a year ago when pulp and paper mills and sawmills started closing. That is the reality that people in other parts of the country have had to deal with. We told the Conservative government about it, but it was not interested. It probably figured that it could put its head in the sand for a while, then come up for air once everything was rosy and the economy was doing just fine.

The fact is that, in September and October of last year, while the government was campaigning across the country, everyone was saying that the crisis was happening, was serious. But the Prime Minister kept saying that there was no crisis, that the worst was over and that we would get through it. The truth is that the warnings came from politicians, citizens and economists. But the Conservatives would not listen.

Who is responsible for the delays? Why did they not take action—back when the time was right and when people told them there was a crisis—to prevent families from suffering every day?

[English]

Mr. Ed Komarnicki: Madam Speaker, we know that it is incredibly hard on families when even one member of the family loses his or her job. That is why we have taken the action that we have taken.

Adjournment Proceedings

I am not sure what the member means, but we have helped around 400,000 people by extending EI benefits by five weeks and ensuring the duration increases from 45 to 50 weeks. Approximately 190,000 people are affected through skills upgrading and training programs. EI rates have been frozen and that alone will inject \$4.5 billion of stimulus into the economy. That is a huge amount. This is taking action.

The member says he does not understand why we have not taken any action. We have taken a number of significant actions that will help people during the difficult times in which they find themselves.

● (1940)

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Denise Savoie): The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 7:40 p.m.)

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