

# 39th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION

EDITED HANSARD • NUMBER 099

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## Tuesday, January 30, 2007

### Canada Pension Plan

The House resumed from January 29 consideration of the motion that Bill C-36, An Act to amend the Canada Pension Plan and the Old Age Security Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

....

**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):**

Mr. Speaker, I congratulate my hon. colleague on his presentation on this issue. We in the New Democratic Party as well are concerned about opening bills like this without substantive changes that can make a difference to Canadians in all places in the country.

My experience in discussing Canada pension plan issues with my constituents in northern and remote communities is that the system is not working for them. Quite clearly the cost of living is so high in those areas and seniors are living on fixed incomes under the Canada pension plan. The plan does not recognize the geographic differences that affect the cost of living for individuals. It is a real question of fairness.

In the community of Tuktoyaktuk, the cost of living is probably 200% more than the cost of living in cities such as Edmonton or Montreal. Our seniors are in dire straits. I do not know if that fits with other rural communities across the country, but would the hon. member comment on whether this pension system is working fairly across the country? Canada is such a large geographic area and the cost of living cannot always be equalized. How does the hon. member feel about this?

....

### Natural Gas

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**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):**

Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has repeatedly said that Canada is an energy superpower and has created a powerful cabinet subcommittee on energy security. However, it is clear what the Conservatives are saying on energy in Canada is not what is being said by government agencies here and abroad.

I just returned from Russia and was briefed there by our embassy. It is saying that Canada is running short of natural gas and needs to import liquefied natural gas. Imported Russian LNG is not a secure form of energy. Hardball energy politics are part of the Russian play book. This imported natural gas will also hurt ordinary working Canadians who earn a living in our oil and gas industry.

For the Northwest Territories, Russian LNG means direct competition for Mackenzie Valley natural gas. For the residents of Lévis, Quebec, Russian LNG represents an

unacceptable environmental hazard in a terminal. For all average Canadians, Russian LNG means higher taxes as the government makes no money on it, unlike Canadian gas.

Without any process or plan, the Conservatives want—

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**The Speaker:**

The hon. member for South Shore—St. Margaret's.

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## 39th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION

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**Wednesday, January 31, 2007**

### The Environment

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**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):**

Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of the Environment.

In the Northwest Territories, all people, including aboriginal leaders, are concerned about record low water levels and how the oil sands are affecting the waterways downstream.

In 1997 the Mackenzie River Basin master agreement was signed. It was supposed to result in agreements between all jurisdictions in the Mackenzie watershed. In 10 years the federal government has dropped the ball and we have seen no action to implement these agreements.

Will the minister support slowing down oil sands development until these agreements are in place to protect Canadians?

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**Hon. John Baird (Minister of the Environment, CPC):**

Mr. Speaker, we are tremendously concerned about the quality of water in this country.

I am very pleased to work with the member opposite and to hear his concerns.

I can tell the member opposite that I did have the opportunity this morning to meet with some 15 representatives of first nations and to hear their concerns about some northern environmental issues.

This government is always willing to work with members on all sides of the House and with first nations on issues that are important to the quality of our water and our environment.

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....

# Energy Strategy

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**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):**

Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Natural Resources.

The provinces have been calling for the creation of an east-west electricity grid. Such a grid would increase Canada's energy security and would be an important element in an overall energy strategy for Canada, something that even the oil companies have been asking for. These calls match with the creation of a powerful cabinet subcommittee on energy security and with the minister's comments of 2006 when he said, "Canada's energy strategy is key to North America's economy."

When will the minister make good on his promise and bring forward to Parliament a Canadian energy strategy to give Canadians a secure and clean energy future?

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**Hon. Gary Lunn (Minister of Natural Resources, CPC):**

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that the provinces are looking at expanding the electricity connections across the country.

I can inform the House that the Council of Energy Ministers right now is looking at this very issue and I am very confident we can make progress on this file.

It is also important that we put clean energy on the grid, which is why this government, in its first year, committed \$2 billion to provide clean energy, to put 4,000 megawatts of clean energy on the grid after the old Liberal government, which claims to be holier than thou, did nothing for 13 years. Putting on a green ribbon does not reduce greenhouse gases. It takes action--

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**The Speaker:**

The hon. member for York West.

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## 39th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION

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**Thursday, February 1, 2007**

**Opposition Motion—The Environment**

....

**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):**

Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for a very interesting dissertation on the nature of the ability to react to a global crisis by reducing the actions to a territorial level.

Quite clearly, in Canada we are in an integrated economy and we still are in a country together. We have certain interests that play against each other and certain interests that we have in common. However, in energy, it is very important to realize that we are an integrated system. We supply natural gas across the country. We could supply more

hydro electric energy across the country as well if we had a grid, but right now we are proposing to take on a new source of fossil fuels and that would be liquefied natural gas.

In the member's province of Quebec we are looking at a terminal right now for the importation of liquefied natural gas from Russia. Does this fit with the member's idea of how the future of Quebec energy should be developed, that we tie into international markets for a fossil fuel product that has a very high environmental cost in its development and transportation? Is this the answer that the member sees for Canada and for Quebec?

....

**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):**

Mr. Speaker, I would like to go back to some of the work that was put in place by the Liberal government on climate reduction and perhaps look at the work done by the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development. She looked at the program for carbon sequestration and found that the moneys had been expended but that only one of the five projects had been completed and the CO<sub>2</sub> reductions from that program were a hundredth of what they had hope for.

Let us look at the wind program. Everyone was pleased that some effort was put into wind in Canada but when we compared the program in Canada to the one in the United States we found that the wind industry here was dealing with a subsidy that was half of that of the United States and U.S. wind producers were selling into a market where wholesale prices for electricity were considerably higher.

When we look at biomass, we have had a complete lack of program development in the use of biomass energy over the last number of years. We have a huge resource in waste wood. Three million tonnes a year is being wasted in our forest industry. Nothing has happened on that front.

What about solar energy? We heard that the people in charge of the Canadian Solar Industries Association admit that we are the least funded nation for solar thermal energy of all the western nations.

On every front on renewable energy, the programs that were put in place were thin soup for Canadian producers and developers.

Why should we continue with programs like that, that were not doing the job for Canadians?

....

Opposition Motion—The Environment

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

....

**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):**

Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with my hon. colleague, the member for Victoria.

Members of the Liberal Party have been waving around a five year old letter from the Prime Minister when he was leader of the Alliance Party. In this letter the Prime Minister made statements about Kyoto being a socialist plan to export Canadian wealth. Yesterday it was the only question the Liberals could ask in the House, but both the Prime Minister and the Liberals are wrong. Shipping Canadian dollars to other countries as the Liberals would have done to meet Kyoto is actually a capitalist plan. It is a plan to ensure that corporations can continue to expand their markets and find a way to deal with Kyoto at the lowest possible cost without any worry about the effect on the global environment.

All around the world the successful countries that have dealt with climate change are social democratic countries which have values which the NDP also has. We have a plan to meet Kyoto and it is a plan based on social democratic principles which will build the

Canadian economy, create jobs for average Canadians and save working families money on their energy bills.

One of the key elements in the NDP plan is to change how we deal with energy. Canada needs an energy strategy. We need to ensure there is clean energy available not just for today but for our children and grandchildren, not a plan that allows a laissez-faire system to exist in this country to recklessly produce and sell off our fossil fuel resources.

What would a strategy look like? The primary goal of an energy strategy must be to provide a secure energy supply sufficient to meet our needs. However, these needs primarily must be reduced. By reducing the needs it will enable the most rapid transition as possible to an energy regime based on conservation and the sustainable use of renewable energy.

The goal of an energy policy must definitely not be merely to produce as much energy as possible to meet a growing global demand with no regard for social and environmental impacts. Conservation and reduction of energy consumption must be one of the pillars of an energy strategy. Consuming less energy will reduce greenhouse gas emissions, reduce air pollution and save ordinary Canadians money. Those are all laudable goals.

The second pillar of an energy strategy is to replace non-renewable energy sources with renewable ones. To do this our strategy would include actions to develop a thriving renewable energy industry in Canada, particularly wind, small hydro, solar and biomass. All of these are possible. All of these are important and all of these can happen in our system.

We need the creation of a crown corporation to assist communities, commercial and industrial interests at the community level, to help create these kinds of energy which are not transported mainly by pipes or transmission lines but really deal with how we use energy at home and in the community.

We need to install 100,000 solar roofs to get our solar energy program going. We are falling behind the rest of the world. Our country has an abysmal record of supporting solar energy.

We need to invest in cogeneration. One of the simplest and most fundamental ways that northern countries save energy is cogeneration; use the waste heat that is produced in industrial and electrical processes.

We need investment in sustainable public transport.

We need to provide funding to support the development of community groups and non-profit organizations to promote activities which have these values and put these values in front of Canadians which allow small businesses, individuals and community governments to make the best of the energy systems that are available to them.

A gradual transition to a sustainable renewable energy regime allowing maximum use of attrition and ensuring planned decreases in production can be accomplished and can save jobs, and can provide a reasonable transition to a new economy.

(1700)

However, any strategy for Canada would be incomplete if it did not address fossil fuels. When we talk about addressing fossil fuels, I do not think we only want to talk about bringing liquefied natural gas into this country to replace a rapidly declining resource that was so mishandled through the 1980s and 1990s by successive Liberal governments.

The NDP strategy would conduct a complete assessment of federal subsidies and incentives to the energy sector, with input from relevant stakeholders, accompanied by the establishment of a specific timetable for the rapid elimination of environmentally harmful subsidies and incentives, particularly those associated with the oil and gas industry.

In order to share my time with my hon. colleague from Victoria, I will bring my debate to a conclusion.

Finally, an energy strategy for Canada must put Canada's energy needs first, not those of the United States, not made in Washington with the North American energy working group giving direction to this country. We need our own energy strategy. We need it in conjunction with the Kyoto plan. Without that energy strategy, we will not get to Kyoto.

....

**Mr. Dennis Bevington:**

Mr. Speaker, throughout the debate today we have heard constant accusations from both sides. Of course the Liberals want to bring the New Democratic Party into the game they are playing with the Conservatives of who is at fault here. The NDP is not interested in who is at fault here. We are here to do something for Canadians right now.

When we look at the Liberal record over many years on many subjects, there is an old saying which makes sense here, that the best indicator of future performance is the past performance. When we look at the past performance of the Liberal Party over 13 years, it was really a sham. How could anyone use the promises of that party in 2005 to judge its relevance for staying in office?

....

**Mr. Dennis Bevington:**

Mr. Speaker, I think the situation is such that energy, the environment and climate change are important issues right now. There is the thought that we will come to a solution in this Parliament and that the four parties working together would take this out of the next campaign when we are next in front of the voters.

The Liberals want to keep some doubt in this process and I think that is something that is shameful. Let us get on with this and get it done. There are four parties here that are willing to work. Let us put this political partisanship--

....

**Mr. Dennis Bevington:**

Mr. Speaker, once again, none of this assists us in bringing forward the kinds of policies that are required to go in the clean air act to make this work for Canadians.

We are not living in the past. This is 2007. We need to move. Let us move on this issue. Let us make it happen.

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## **39th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION**

**EDITED HANSARD • NUMBER 103**

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**Monday, February 5, 2007**

### **Canada Elections Act**

The House resumed from February 2 consideration of Bill C-31, An Act to amend the Canada Elections Act and the Public Service Employment Act, as reported (with amendment) from the committee, and of the motions in Group No. 1.

....

**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):**

Mr. Speaker, quite often people want to associate social democratic parties with big government but that is not really the case.

I would ask my hon. colleague to talk to the problem that we are running into in the philosophy between parties, the sort of knee-jerk actions that we have seen on security over the last number of years. Does this play out in that factor? Are we dealing with the same kind of right wing ideological desire for control over the electorate and for additional security? Is this another one of those steps that fits into that pattern?

....

**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):**

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak to Bill C-31, An Act to amend the Canada Elections Act and the Public Service Employment Act.

Coming from a northern riding in the Northwest Territories, this issue has raised a great deal of concern in my riding. It has been the subject of questions in our legislative assembly and it has raised the ire of northerners in my constituency and, I am sure, every other northern constituency across the country. These types of restrictions on voting, which we would be creating with the requirement for photo identification, would hit hardest among people in small communities across northern Canada, our aboriginal people and older people who live a simple life in many communities across the north and who may not have a driver's licence. They may have a hunting licence but that does not have a photo on it.

Once again we will see legislation that, arguably, might have some place in large urban ridings but which will have a detrimental effect on northern Canadians and Canadians in isolated communities across the country.

Many of the MPs who are from northern ridings and who represent these communities will be voting for this legislation, but I urge them not to. I urge them to stand up for their constituents and for northern Canadians and vote against the bill.

The bill represents more of the intrusive big government that Canadians never wanted and continue not to want. It represents more of the security type of provisions that we are seeing in legislation in Parliament that reflects the paranoia that has increased in our country and in other countries since 9/11. The bill stands against the roots of our democracy and will impact voters.

I have been in many tight election campaigns in my career. I remember the election campaign where the Conservatives won in my riding by one vote over a member of Parliament, Wally Firth. Many ballots were contested because many elders who had voted with clear intent had not put the X in the right spot. They did it the old way. The way one put one's X was changed 1979. People who were illiterate or who did not understand voted the wrong way and the Conservative candidate won and our candidate lost. That could happen in any riding and it could happen in any sequence.

The point is that when we change the way people are accustomed to voting things can happen. What happens when a voter who has voted in elections most of his life walks into a voting station and needs to pull out a photo ID? The person could be a hunter who just came in out of the bush and does not have any photo ID. How does that make him feel about the electoral process?

How do we think that makes people feel about the way that we are conducting business in this country? There needs to be good reasons for changing the way we allow people to exercise their fundamental franchise in this country, their right to vote for us. I truly think this is an intrusion on that.

(1220)

The types of things in the bill, such as the clause 18, the sharing of birth dates with political parties, I find also quite repugnant. I go back to my grandmother who moved to this country in the early 1920s, escaping the Bolsheviks in Russia. Her whole life she would not tell anybody her birth date. My mother did not even know how old my grandmother was. We did not find out that she was 100 years old until she died and we

obtained her birth certificate. She voted all her life and she was an honest, good citizen, but she was not interested in sharing her birth date with anyone.

The thought that we are making people share their birth dates with political parties, which will use it for their own particular purposes, is quite repugnant and should be repugnant to every member of Parliament in this place. We should recognize that Canadian citizens have rights to their own privacy and dignity. We must do everything to maintain those things, regardless of our interest in understanding how we can usurp their thoughts and change the way they think about voting through understanding their age and direction.

The bill deserves a great deal of contempt, and I hope I have expressed that today. I do not want to take any more of the House's time on the bill. I have said my piece and I will leave it to other members to stand on their consciences.

....

**Mr. Dennis Bevington:**

Mr. Speaker, I have experienced many election campaigns in which much information is moved around, and the security of information in a political office is sometimes completely suspect. Other times it might be held onto. However, this information is shared with all parties, so everyone has it.

As my colleague from Windsor pointed out earlier, this information is on the record permanently, it is ongoing. Those voters lists at the end of the election, unless they are shredded, will be around and they will be shared. These things will be part of the public knowledge to so many people in the community, so how could this be a good thing for Canadians?

The Conservative Party, which always puts up a good fight for individual values and the rights of individuals, and the Liberal Party, which attempts to do the same thing, are supporting the legislation. What is it with them? Have they taken leave of their own values? Can they not understand there are some things in this life that should be sacred to people, that they should be able to hold in their own trust. Government and political parties should keep their noses out of the birth dates of average Canadians. My goodness, I do not understand how this even came forward.

....

**Mr. Dennis Bevington:**

Mr. Speaker, regardless of a commissioner making comment on it, I can make comment on it myself. I can recognize it. As I pointed out, my family understands those values of protecting people's rights to privacy. What a commissioner may rule on it will not change our opinion. Our opinion is built on years of practice and years of understanding.

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## **39th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION**

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**Tuesday, February 6, 2007**



## Criminal Code

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-32, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (impaired driving) and to make consequential amendments to other Acts be read the second time and referred to a committee.

....

**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):**

Mr. Speaker, when I look at the bill, I think of what happened in the past with the regulations that were set for the consumption of alcohol and driving. We went through a fairly rigorous process of determining over the years scientifically that it was .08, but we have seen movement now to a higher level of intolerance with alcohol content in the body. My riding has gone to .05. This has not been done through a process but through pressure rather than a scientific understanding of the nature of impairment.

With this particular bill, where we are dealing with a multitude of substances taken singularly and in combination, how do ensure that we are charging people who are actually impaired, in other words, providing incontrovertible evidence or even a standard of application that can give some surety to the courts and to our citizens who are human beings like all of us and may partake in one or other of the substances that are part of the common culture in Canada?

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## 39th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION

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## Thursday, February 8, 2007

### Opposition Motion— Kyoto Protocol

The House resumed consideration of the motion, and of the amendment.

....

**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):**

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise and speak to the Bloc Québécois motion on the need to restore the funding promised by the previous government to the province of Quebec. With the amendments that have been accepted from our party, we have a very interesting opportunity to discuss this issue.

I agree with the member for Laurier—Sainte-Marie on most of the points he makes. However, my experience in federal-provincial energy relations stems back to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities. In early 2000 I was appointed to the council that dealt with the fund. Early on we received numerous applications from municipalities in the province of Quebec. They wished to use innovation to develop new ways to deal with energy and to improve the systems that ran their communities.

It was not long before the provincial government at that time shut that whole opportunity down for the municipalities of Quebec. Those great ideas, which we saw in

applications for the first six months, were shelved. It was an inter-jurisdictional dispute about who could receive resources to apply them to good work. We have to be careful with territorial aspects to dealing with international and global problems and not recognizing the importance of local participation and local ability to share with other similar concerns across the country and perhaps even across the world.

When we look territorially, we limit our scope. The types of projects that were presented in Quebec could well have been replicated across the country. The types of projects that we received in western Canada from municipalities could well have been used quite comfortably in Quebec. An arena in Weyburn, Saskatchewan is the same as an arena in Trois Rivières, Quebec. The problems are the same and the solutions are likely to be similar.

When we try to break things down into smaller parts, sometimes we find that the solutions, the opportunities and the results are not as good. Therefore, I want to be careful about this. That is my experience in the federal-provincial arena with energy related projects.

As well, at the federal-provincial level, we need cooperation on larger projects. When we talk about an east-west power grid, we need cooperation from Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba and Labrador and Newfoundland. We need to think together about the ways to solve the issues that come with providing the transportation links for renewable energy across the country. It is not good enough that we operate in isolation.

In fact, there is no doubt we even have to think with countries outside our borders. We cannot ignore the elephant to the south. We cannot ignore it as a reality in our energy picture in North America. If we ignore it, we are not doing our job for Canada, for the globe or for our province. In the end that will not work.

We have to be cognizant of the nature of the problem and the ways that we can look for solutions. We have to work together cooperatively at all levels, regardless of our aspirations on the political side. This is not a political issue. It is an environmental issue and a global catastrophe on the way.

(1625)

The leader of the Bloc says that Canada must respect its international agreements on the environment. There are not too many ordinary Canadians who would argue with this.

The NDP has been fighting with the Conservatives and the Liberals to live up to Kyoto for years. We all voted in favour of such a motion only last week. It is so very good to see the House respecting and honouring that agreement. Unfortunately, we still have not seen action on it which can even come close to making our way toward Kyoto.

The member called for the introduction of a market for carbon, along with hard emissions caps and a policy of polluter pays. Those have long been the NDP's plans for a greener Canada.

In fact, last June when we put forward a plan which would save average Canadians money, create jobs and clean up the air, the NDP's plan said that a New Democratic Party would give fair notice to large emitters. Starting in 2008, permissible emissions would be capped and the cap would be annually reduced, with an eventual goal of 50% reduction in emissions by 2030.

This is the kind of thing we want to see happen in the House of Commons today. This is the kind of action that can deliver Canada a Kyoto strategy. This is what can make it work for all of us.

We also want to introduce a market based auction for available emissions credits in 2009, with credits divided among sectors. At the outset, the auction would cover less than 10% of available credits, with a goal of all emissions credits sold by auction by 2030. Proceeds from the sale of emissions credits would go to sustainability projects across the country.

That is real action, and it is good to see other parties coming around to the NDP's thinking.

The Bloc's third point is that Canada must stop the government assistance to the oil industry. The NDP has been long calling for an end to this corporate welfare, started under the Liberals and continued under the Conservatives.

Last year Imperial Oil posted the largest profits in its history, \$3 billion. Its parent company's, Exxon, was considerably larger, at \$40 billion. Even the senators in the United States could not take that and swallow it. It was too much for them. It was outlandish, in the words of the senators from the country to the south of us. They want to brag about how much of that amount was made in the oil sands, and no doubt. The tax and royalty regimes in place for the oil sands are the biggest giveaway we have seen in a long time in the oil industry. It truly is remarkable that this continues today.

With record profits like this, do the oil companies really need these tax breaks? I think Chavez proved it in Venezuela when he upped the royalties by over 30%. There was only one oil company that walked out of the country, and that was Exxon. The rest stayed and made money.

In reality, things can happen in this country, as well.

I am not sure about the last two points made by the leader of the Bloc. I feel that a territorial approach to dealing with climate change, as I pointed out, would lead to lost opportunities, duplication of efforts and an inefficient use of the limited resources of all of us in the House and across the country.

Climate change is a problem faced by all the peoples of the planet. We have to work together, collectively. While there is room for individual action, I believe much more could be achieved by working together.

On the last point made by the leader, I agree that Canada must be prepared to offer financial help, but to all jurisdictions. I am glad to see that the Bloc has accepted the amendment. I really think the provision of \$320 million to Quebec and commensurate amounts to other jurisdictions is a useful gesture at this point in time. However, the past commitment of that sum of money will not bring any of our provinces to Kyoto. That will not happen.

(1630)

When we look at the Natural Resources Canada outlook we see that in 1990, Quebec produced 87 megatons of carbon dioxide. The projection is that by 2020 it will be at 110 megatons. That increase includes the increase in generating capacity from wind by 8%, the refurbishing of a nuclear plant, and La Romaine hydro plant would be in service by that time.

In Quebec as well there are issues with reaching Kyoto targets. When so much of our energy is provided by hydroelectric power, then the solutions that we are looking for to reduce greenhouse gas emissions will be focused more on space heating, residential, commercial and transportation. By 2020, the Quebec energy mix will be well over 50% fossil fuels.

Those are not easy problems that can be solved overnight by an infusion of \$320 million into a provincial budget. Those are problems that are solved by long term action that plans for the energy future of this country, of North America and of the world.

Quebec's energy wealth is in hydroelectric power, one of the cleanest forms of energy available. With its vast hydroelectric potential, Quebec is well-suited to develop other forms of clean energy, such as wind or tidal power. Nothing is better than a reservoir full of water to match up to large expanses of wind farms across the very strong wind areas of the northern St. Lawrence.

It is anticipated that Quebec's demand for electricity will increase by about 10% between now and 2020. Support by hydroelectric alternative sources of energy could meet the increasing demand and provide residents of Quebec with clean and secure energy in the future. Investments in types of space heating that are above thermal energy from electricity would be very useful.

Geothermal is a natural match for Quebec. It is a natural thing to happen in that province which has such an abundance of good, clean hydroelectric power. The investment in geothermal in Quebec is a great investment and it should be made. It is an investment that has great potential for that province.

However, this is not the only energy that Quebec uses and needs. As I pointed out earlier, by 2020 over 50% of the energy in Quebec will be provided by fossil fuels. Quite clearly, in Canada we have a very secure supply of natural gas and oil. Those things are in

a world of increasing turmoil and, in a world where we know that energy is an issue in almost every other place in the world, Canada can be a haven for its own citizens for those kinds of energy.

However, if that is the case, why does the Bloc support the development of liquefied natural gas entering into the Quebec market? Despite the overwhelming opposition from local residents, the Liberal government of Quebec is supporting the construction of a liquefied natural gas terminal at Lévis, across the river from Quebec City. Liquefied natural gas uses four times as much energy in its production and transportation as natural gas in a pipeline from western Canada.

Liquefied natural gas has a CO<sub>2</sub> profile equivalent to crude oil. It is not the product that will provide clean energy to Quebec. It is, of course, transferring that CO<sub>2</sub> to another country, whether it be Russia, Indonesia or Qatar, one of those countries where the greenhouse gases will be emitted into the atmosphere and add to the problem that we have globally with energy.

(1635)

LNG creates an unacceptable safety hazard to those who live close by, including the residents of Quebec City's old town near the St. Lawrence River. They are still in the danger zone. This fact was recently supported by the area's public health officials.

As well, LNG would further increase Canada's and Quebec's energy insecurity because of where it comes from. Russia and the OPEC states have played energy politics in the past and are most likely to do it again. There is no question that the international market for LNG will grow and that the price will go up to match other mobile fuels that are available in the world, which will cause dislocation to those who invest in this type of technology.

What plan do we have for the gas that is going into Quebec now? A proponent outlines that it will increase the flow of gas from western Canada into the United States. The gas that we are now providing to Quebec will go down to the United States. When we sell more gas to the United States the proportionality clause of NAFTA comes into play and we are stuck with that. We are locked in.

Does that make sense in the world today? We know we are in a difficult situation with natural gas in Canada. We could maintain our own supply and do what we need to do for our own citizens but the exports of natural gas to the United States are beggaring our supply. We do have problems with natural gas and this type of activity in Quebec will just make them worse.

It seems unlikely to me that Quebeckers are in favour of trading clean, secure, domestic sources of energy for insecure foreign sources that release huge amounts of greenhouse gases.

I must ask my colleagues from the Bloc what their is position on this. Have the Bloc members had the time to take a position on this? Do we understand all the ramifications of what is happening in Quebec, in Nova Scotia and, potentially, in British Columbia with this product? No, we do not.

If we do not have an energy strategy for this country we are putting our country at risk as it moves along. This is unacceptable in a civilized country.

Tomorrow I will be making a presentation at the hearings concerning a terminal in Quebec City. Perhaps my Bloc colleagues would like to join me and talk about the nature of energy in this country and the importance of thinking ahead about energy and planning ahead. We cannot allow the world forces to run Canada.

For too many years we have allowed a laissez-faire system when it comes to energy. Every other exporting country in the world has taken hold of its energy resources and has said that it will work for them. What are we doing in Canada? We are holding North American Energy Working Group meetings where we are not truly having a debate among Canadians about what we should do with our energy. We are listening to what the United States wants us to do with our energy to help it out.

I think it is time we put Canada and Quebec first and it is time that we worked together to make a good future for people in Canada. It is up to us to save our grandchildren from

a future where energy is coming from other countries, where we are at the vagaries of the world market and we have not put it together for ourselves. This is the time that we need to put it together for ourselves and we should.

....

**Mr. Dennis Bevington:**

Mr. Speaker, I truly trust and hope Quebec is successful in achieving its plans to move ahead in making itself Kyoto compliant.

As I said in my speech, the \$320 million may be part of what needs to be done in Canada but the effort that has to go into this across this country is much larger. When I look at a commensurate amount of money that would perhaps go into my jurisdiction in the Northwest Territories, it would not be too much money. I know what the result of that kind of investment would be there. It would not be enough.

We need to mobilize vast sums of money across this country and invest it in correct fashion to achieve the results that we are looking for in Kyoto. I personally feel that there is such a good return to the economy in the end that this will work for us.

Our party supports the amendment. We are pleased the Bloc is supporting the amendment and we look forward to the vote on the motion.

....

**Mr. Dennis Bevington:**

Mr. Speaker, people are realizing how important the idea of an east-west power grid is. It allows the country to develop a renewable energy backbone that goes right across the country. Electricity is the medium by which renewable energy in so many cases is transmitted. A natural gas pipeline is not going to be full of renewable energy. If we build and electrical grid, we can add renewable energy to it across the country.

Canada has one of the greatest wind resources in the world, but we do not have the connections that allow it to be used efficiently and effectively. That is the problem. An east-west power grid linking hydroelectric reservoirs in Manitoba, Quebec and B.C., would allow the development of an integrated renewable energy system.

It is not good enough to share with the United States. The United States is another jurisdiction. Making arrangements with the Americans so that we could use renewable energy in a correct fashion is unlikely. It is more likely within this country, among Canadians, that we can make this happen. This is the challenge ahead of us.

Manitoba Premier Gary Doer has spoken eloquently on this topic--

....

**Mr. Dennis Bevington:**

Mr. Speaker, it goes back to the point I made in my speech. Making Kyoto happen is a national task. It is not a provincial task; it is a national and international task. I am certain that if the NDP Government of Saskatchewan had doubts about Kyoto when the Chrétien government signed it and knew that the Chrétien government at the same time had a laissez faire attitude toward the development of fossil fuels across the country, it must have known that it was unlikely to happen. The NDP government's opposition to it may have been simply that it realized there were no mechanisms in place, there was no opportunity and nothing there that could make Kyoto happen at the time.

Here we are sitting in Parliament in 2007. There are four parties that say they want to move toward Kyoto. There is a committee working on that and we have the opportunity actually to do something for Canadians. Let us put the history behind us and get on with the job that we have in this Parliament today.

....

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# 39th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION

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CONTENTS

## Thursday, February 15, 2007

Opposition Motion—Government Policies

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

....

**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):**

Mr. Speaker, the Liberal motion speaks to the frustration the Liberal Party has sitting in opposition in a minority Parliament. It speaks to my frustration as well in a minority situation. Quite clearly the rules of Parliament are still colonial and do not allow this assembly to truly act democratically. If the government knew that in the case of a non-confidence motion a new arrangement could be struck between the other parties as to the government's future, this would put a lot more pressure on the government to deal with issues correctly. Sixty-five per cent of Canadians did not vote for the Conservatives. They voted for a much more progressive agenda.

Does my hon. colleague not agree that the rules of this House should allow for a democratic process when a government falls and allow choice for another government?

....

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# 39th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION

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CONTENTS

## Friday, February 16, 2007

**Natural Resources**

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**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):**

Mr. Speaker, last week the Northwest Territories brought down its budget. In his speech, the NWT finance minister put the government on notice that we want progress and ownership of our natural resources through devolution. Like so many northerners, the NWT's finance minister said he is growing impatient with the lack of real progress on an issue so vital to the future of our territory.

The Prime Minister has personally promised quick action on these issues, but just like it was with the Liberals, there is no progress. All we have seen is the appointment of a former Mulroney cabinet minister, who says we have to start all over again.

This is unacceptable. When are northerners finally going to see some action?

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**Mr. Rod Bruinooge (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, CPC):**

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Indian Affairs has been in discussions with Premier Handley on this important file, and of course we have appointed a negotiator to come to an agreement in principle, as we see devolution in the Northwest Territories as essential not only to Canada but to the future of the NWT.

\* \* \*

....

## Canada Elections Act

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-31, An Act to amend the Canada Elections Act and the Public Service Employment Act, be read the third time and passed, and of the motion that this question be now put.

....

**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):**

Mr. Speaker, as the member for Western Arctic, I will preface my remarks for my colleague by saying yes, in Western Arctic this issue has been debated in the newspapers, and it has been debated in our legislative assembly. People know this is an issue that drives to the heart of the sense Canadians have of their own place in their country and their own identity.

As for the idea that now we are going to drag out a photo ID licensed by the government in order for us to vote, in a small community, where everybody in the community knows each other, people do not carry identification with them on many occasions. In my own home community, I do not carry identification around with me. I do not find it necessary. I do not find it useful. I leave it at home where it is safe. When I do need it, I can get it.

There will be a lot of people right across this country in large cities and in small places who will not have their ID when they go in to vote at the voters' booth. This will disenfranchise them. They will be turned off voting. We are going to create more of a problem.

The real problem we have with voting in this country is that we do not get everybody out to vote. Forty per cent of voters do not show up to vote. That is a much greater and a much more serious problem than the four people who were charged with fraud in three elections. We have a staggering problem if 40% of our electorate does not go out to vote.

In my riding, it is probably closer to 50%. I do not want to put impediments to voting in their way. I want them to vote because by voting they join the democratic process and they validate what we in the House of Commons are doing.

I would like to ask my honourable colleague a question. In his riding, does everyone have voter ID and does everyone carry voter ID on election day? When they finish work, head to the voters' booth and find they do not have ID, are they going to be satisfied with going home across the city and coming back to vote?

....

**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):**

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to again speak to the bill because I, along with my caucus, truly feel that this bill is bad for Canada, bad for the electoral system and is not what we need right now.

We have heard many arguments in reference to that this afternoon. I truly hope Canadians are listening.

Before I came into the House I met with some businessmen from Alberta. I told them that I had to come back into the House to speak to this bill. They asked me why I was doing that in the House of Commons and for what purpose. I told them that I did not have an answer. However, as I sit and think about the clauses in the bill, I can find some answers.

More and more, those parties want to turn politics into a retail business and, by having birthdates, it can be done. Using modern computer systems, we can target voters and give them selected information that will appeal to their age group, the kind of people one fully expects to see in there. By that token, we can be less than honest with voters about our intentions when we govern by selecting the kinds of policies that we present to them.

There is anonymity in the voting system and among the voters. Politicians need to tell them everything. When politicians get elected, they know they have not told the voters what they should know. This is a glorious opportunity for political parties to be selective with the voters in the information given. That is not part of the political system in which I want to participate. I want people to have full information about political parties, not some kind of Sears public relations platform that parties produce for different age groups.

This is probably where the voter age information is going and where it will be used by clever minds in political parties that do not have the integrity of the voter in mind first.

We have heard the numbers for voter fraud: 4 cases among 24 million voters. Let us talk about the candidate fraud that we have seen. How many candidates have misrepresented themselves when they said they were Liberals or Conservatives during the past three elections and then changed their mind? Out of the 308 ridings, we are talking about a far larger percentage than the voter fraud we have in this country. Canadians are tired of that.

What did we in the House do? Did we do something to stop the practice of candidate fraud? No. Two of the political parties turned down our bill to deal with candidates who do not stick to what they say after they are elected. Candidate fraud is, by far, the larger number in our electoral process.

What do we have here? We have a bill that tries to determine voters' identities. In many cases, a photo ID will be required. What percentage of Canadians have a driver's licence? Was that evidence presented to us? No evidence was given on the percentage of Canadians who have identification available to them at a moment's notice.

We do not understand the impact of this legislation on Canadians. We do not understand it and yet those three political parties are supporting it. This is shoddy work in the House of Commons. If one does not understand what is going to happen from the work one is doing, then one is not doing one's work properly. Since the evidence about the availability of identification to Canadians was not raised in committee, then we have not done our work. This bill should be sent back and re-examined in light of that kind of evidence.

(1520)

We have a flawed bill. We have a bill that was amended with a clause that even Conservatives found unacceptable when they first heard it. Their gut sense told them it was wrong. They changed their minds for purely political reasons.

Now we have a bill in front of us that the three parties are willing to support and yet they are not even here to hear the arguments because they do not want to hear the arguments. That is a shame. That speaks to the problems we have in our system. I am not going to go--



....

**Mr. Dennis Bevington:**

Mr. Speaker, I apologize. In my enthusiasm, I am afraid I overstepped my bounds. I will conclude by saying that I hope Canadians understand that this debate is important and that this debate sets the tone for how we conduct ourselves in this country.

....

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## **39th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION**

**EDITED HANSARD • NUMBER 113**

**CONTENTS**

**Monday, February 19, 2007**

### **Canadian Human Rights Act**

The House resumed from February 7 consideration of the motion that Bill C-44, An Act to amend the Canadian Human Rights Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

....

**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):**

Mr. Speaker, my question is for my hon. colleague from the Bloc. Three parties have been calling for more consultation on this bill or they have been saying that the consultation has been inadequate. I agree completely with that. For parliamentarians to understand the complexity of the changes that this will require in a lot of the practices of first nations across the country, this can only be gleaned through proper consultation. It is complex. It fits with many of the practices and customs.

If we move this bill along, how does the member think we will be able to achieve any kind of goals of consultation within a committee process?

....

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## **39th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION**

**EDITED HANSARD • NUMBER 114**

**CONTENTS**

**Tuesday, February 20, 2007**

## **Opposition Motion--National Anti-poverty Strategy**

....

### **Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):**

Mr. Speaker, I too thank the hon. colleague for her excellent presentation on disability and her understanding of the nature of that part of society, which needs more attention.

When we speak about the minimum wage, we think of people in poverty in the workforce. We think of the many opportunities there are to slip up in the workforce when one is working for \$6 or \$7 an hour. We think of the kinds of things that can take one out of the workforce and into unemployment very quickly, things that are not in one's ability to control.

Why would the hon. member not support our aim to raise the minimum wage so people, when they are working, have a decent chance to remain working and overcome the obstacles put in their way in their daily lives? Extra dollars can make a difference.

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# **39th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION**

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### **CONTENTS**

## **Wednesday, February 21, 2007**

### **Northwest Territories**

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#### **Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):**

Mr. Speaker, Canada's north has been called the last great bastion of colonial rule. While there have been some transfers of authority to the northerners, the north still lacks many of the essential powers that the provinces enjoy. In reality, the north is very much under Ottawa's thumb and that thumb belongs to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development.

In 1996 I co-chaired the Northwest Territories constitutional development steering committee that was tasked with developing a replacement for the current constitution, the federal Northwest Territories Act. The final recommendation from us was that constitutional development and finalization of aboriginal land and self-government claims should proceed together.

This recommendation was based on the fact that the Canadian Constitution protects both the right to public government and aboriginal inherent right of self-government. Since we have made that recommendation, there has been little progress on the right to public government in the Northwest Territories.

Because of this lack of progress, this weekend aboriginal and community leaders and I will be joint hosting a public forum in Yellowknife on NWT constitutional development.

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# 39th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION

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CONTENTS

## Friday, February 23, 2007

### Railway Operations Legislation

....

**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):**

Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague across for the chronology of the events. This lack of action on the part of the government shows a basic disregard for the process. It shows how the labour movement has been downgraded over the years, how serious labour action in the integrated economy can be and how important it is for the government to be out front with this and deal with it in a timely fashion. We see the results of this now. We see the results of the lack of respect for the labour movement, which leads to this kind of situation.

Does he really think the government has acted fairly with the labour movement so far and with the strikers who are involved in this by its inaction over the past two weeks?

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# 39th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION

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CONTENTS

## Monday, February 26, 2007

### Criminal Code

....

**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):**

Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak to Bill S-213. I would like to advise the House that the NDP will not be supporting the bill.

We take the issue of cruelty to animals very seriously. The current animal cruelty laws were enacted in 1892 and have not been substantially altered in 114 years of Parliament's rule over this land. The answer to dealing with these issues is not simply to

cosmetically increase the sentences that are being meted out for offences that are not enforceable in the first place and have not been enforceable over many years.

There have been many instances of animal cruelty where the RCMP has not bothered with charges because the punishment meted out was not worth pursuing the case and it was impossible to prove wilful neglect. We need more of a deterrent. We need something that speaks to the nature of animal cruelty in a modern context.

Hon. members who have spoken before me have talked about the history of dealing with this issue in Parliament over the last seven years. Parliamentarians and governments have tried to focus on this issue and have found that it is impossible to move modern legislation through the two Houses that deals with animal cruelty.

The former government's Bill C-50 was not allowed to pass through the Senate. In 2003 it had support from animal protection groups, animal industry groups such as farmers, trappers and researchers, the vast majority of Canadians, and all parties in the House of Commons.

We have seen a disconnect when dealing with this issue of animal cruelty. We are stuck. We are only dealing with this bill now, not another companion bill, that would achieve support in the House and in the Senate. On the one hand we can put this bill forward which will cosmetically increase the penalties for animal cruelty, but it will not deal with the fundamental issues of a modern animal cruelty bill. That is not adequate. It should not be adequate to parliamentarians. It was not adequate in 2003 and I fail to see how it has become adequate today.

When we look at animal cruelty and the opportunities for the misunderstanding that comes with harvesting of animals, with the use of animals in agriculture, those things cry out for a clear definition. They cry out for a modern bill that would set the terms and conditions by which human beings could deal with animals. Without that, the deterrents are meaningless.

My constituents have spoken to me on this issue and have urged me not to support Bill S-213. I see their logic. I am concerned. The hon. member for the Bloc said that if we set higher deterrents without understanding the nature of cruelty to animals and without outlining it carefully in the legislation, we may find that it will lead to difficulties in different industries in the future.

(1145)

My constituents still are part of the trapping industry. My constituents utilize animals in a modern fashion. When I look back through the history of trapping, humane traps were designed by trappers in response to their understanding of the nature of cruelty to animals. That is admirable. The industry looks at how it conducts business and regulates itself to a great degree. The understanding of the nature of that can lie with the industry very well.

In my own home community of Fort Smith, the Conibear trap was originally developed by a trapper who worked for many years in the bush. He saw how leghold traps worked and how effective they were and how the tools they used worked with the animal population they were harvesting.

Those types of issues need understanding in a bill. It is not good enough simply to increase the sentences for the actions of society toward animals. We need to understand how to use the law to make society work better with animals. That requires more than simply raising the penalties in a law that was first enacted in 1892 and virtually has not changed since then.

I do not think that this action today is correct. We need to look at the question in its entirety. Parliamentarians in the past have done that. We have not been able to come to a full consensus in both houses but we have a duty to Canadians to act correctly in this fashion.

Our party's justice critic may have an opportunity to expand on this in further debate. I urge members to consider carefully what is being done here.

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**Tuesday, February 27, 2007**

## **Arctic Sovereignty**

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**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):**

Mr. Speaker, Canada's Arctic sovereignty is becoming a concern for working Canadians. With the ice melting and the Northwest Passage opening wider every day, the government does not even know who is in charge of protecting our sovereignty.

Earlier this month the general in charge of military planning said that Indian and Northern Affairs is now responsible for Arctic sovereignty.

Could the Prime Minister tell northerners what has the government planned for Arctic sovereignty and who is in charge of this critical file?

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**Hon. Gordon O'Connor (Minister of National Defence, CPC):**

Mr. Speaker, a number of departments and ministers are involved in enforcing our sovereignty in the north.

I provide the military portion of northern sovereignty. The Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development is also involved, as are the Minister of Natural Resources, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and other ministers.

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**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):**

Mr. Speaker, the government is more confused than even I thought. Someone has to be in charge. From the general's comments last week, I am to understand that a new approach is being developed, a civilian approach, like the NDP has recommended.

Will the new approach be one of stewardship? We must focus on sustainable development and research, while working cooperatively with the people of the north. Will the minister include the people of the north as plans for Arctic sovereignty are being developed?

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**Hon. Gordon O'Connor (Minister of National Defence, CPC):**

Mr. Speaker, our government takes the north as a very important element of our country, not only our sovereignty but also to protect the environment and the people up there as well. Any action we take, no matter which department, we will always consult the people up there.

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# 39th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION

# EDITED HANSARD • NUMBER 123

## CONTENTS

# Monday, March 19, 2007

## Canada Pension Plan

The House resumed from March 2 consideration of the motion that Bill C-36, An Act to amend the Canada Pension Plan and the Old Age Security Act, be read the third time and passed.

....

**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):**

Mr. Speaker, Western Arctic is a riding that has mostly rural and remote communities. There are many elders who have not had regular job experience that would allow them to build a comfortable pension. They live in communities where the cost of living is 200% higher than that of most of our cities.

The problem that seniors have identified to me over and over again is that when they do a little extra work, maybe go out trapping for a few furs or something else in the community that allows them to make a few extra dollars, it all gets taxed away from them. It gets taken out of their guaranteed income supplement. This is a huge problem throughout northern Canada. How can we address this problem? How can we give these people some relief? Seniors just want to work to make a little bit extra to pay the bills. It is very expensive for them to live.

....

## Natural Resources

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**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):**

Mr. Speaker, last week Imperial Oil announced that the Mackenzie Valley pipeline project will be further delayed and that the costs of the project have more than doubled.

I am sure the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development has heard from his friends in the Petroleum Club that the government needs to hand over more taxpayer dollars to get this project moving. This same oil company also announced that it has posted the largest profit in its history.

I ask the minister, instead of just handing over billions of dollars from ordinary Canadians to these rich oil companies, will he use these dollars to build roads, schools and community infrastructure to support sustainable development in the north?

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**Mr. Rod Bruinooge (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, CPC):**

Mr. Speaker, clearly the Mackenzie gas project is an important economic benefit to the north. Our government is going to support the private sector in seeing that come through to fruition.

This is something that I think the private sector is going to be heavily involved with. The Government of Canada is going to let the private sector deliver it.

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**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):**

Mr. Speaker, that is not much of an answer for the people of the north.

The economic development of Canada's north is more than just helping rich oil companies reap larger profits. It is about a planned approach which protects the northern environment, provides a decent standard of living for ordinary northerners, and ensures an orderly development of the north's resources.

Will the minister use this delay to create an industrial strategy for the Mackenzie Valley that really helps the north?

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**Mr. Rod Bruinooge (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, CPC):**

Mr. Speaker, we have been very active throughout the north. Both the Prime Minister and the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development have been throughout the north assisting northern communities not only with economic development but the housing sector as well. We are going to continue to keep the north in our focus.

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## **39th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION**

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**CONTENTS**

**Monday, March 26, 2007**

**The Budget**

Financial Statement of Minister of Finance

The House resumed from March 21 consideration of the motion that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government, and of the amendment.

....

**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):**

Mr. Speaker, I congratulate my hon. colleague from Saskatchewan for his presentation and his note that Saskatchewan's economy is doing so well under the able leadership of Lorne Calvert and the New Democratic Party. Even though Saskatchewan has had to fight its way through and has not had the glorious resources that other provinces have, it has done very well with what it has.

Fiscal imbalance, resource revenue sharing are all important issues to my riding as well. It is a jurisdiction, a province in waiting. The movement on devolution and resource revenue sharing for our region is not in the budget. It has not happened. Every year that it does not happen, whether it under the Liberals or under the Conservatives, we lose hundreds of millions of dollars.

Does the member think this is a fair situation for a burgeoning new territory to be held back on its fiscal ability to build the infrastructure to allow it to create a province that can rival the others in the country?

....

**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):**

Mr. Speaker, I am interested in the fiscal relationships the hon. member has described. I will go back to revenues for provinces and the federal government. The one that really sticks in the craw of the NDP is the one reducing corporate income taxes at the federal level. That is one of the prime reasons we have trouble supporting the budget both now and in the past.

Is it not true that the best place to collect corporate taxes is at the federal level? At the provincial level we have seen the situation where the provinces are fighting with each other for the lowest rate in order to attract corporations to actually file in their province. When we degrade corporate income tax at the federal level, we are degrading the one that is uniform across the country and does not have this problem.

I would like the hon. member to speak to that point because the Liberals introduced the idea of reducing corporate tax a number of years ago.

....

**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):**

Mr. Speaker, I do not think that my hon. colleague's premise that he will wait for the successful completion of a sovereignty exercise in Quebec before moving forward on many of the issues that affect working people in this country is the approach that would fit with the people in his constituency.

The Conservatives are trying to sell the budget on the basis of it being a working class budget for working people. However, when we see no help for EI; no help for day care that is of any significance any more; corporate tax cuts of some \$9 billion carried on; tax exemptions that are not targeted or do not deliver the maximum to lower paid Canadians but actually deliver the maximum to middle and upper class Canadians, when we see what the budget actually entails and we take it apart piece by piece, we realize pretty quickly that the budget is not about working class people.

Is my hon. colleague prepared to leave working class people in Quebec waiting until some date of a potential sovereignty vote before dealing with these issues?

....

## Winter Sports

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**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):**

Mr. Speaker, I would like to devote my statement today to the athletes of the Northwest Territories. Though we are few in number, the people of the NWT are strong in heart and our athletes prove it.

Congratulations to Brendan Green of Hay River who won gold at the Canada Winter Games in Whitehorse and who this weekend won gold and silver at the National Biathlon Championships and Sarah Daitch of Fort Smith who, by winning double gold at Haywood Noram/Madshus Sprints, earned a spot on Canada's team to the Nordic World Ski Championships in Sapporo, Japan. These are just two of the NWTs great cross-country skiers who follow in the tradition of Inuvik's Olympians Sharon and Shirley Firth.

Also in cross-country, Thomsen d'Hont and Mike Argue brought back a silver medal to Yellowknife in the 1.2 kilometre team sprint from the Canadian Championships in Quebec City.



In curling I congratulate Jamie Koe's Yellowknife rink for its great showing at the Tim Horton's Brier in Hamilton and particularly Mark Whitehead who took home the Ross Harstone Trophy.

Northerners love our winter sports be they curling, dogsledding, Arctic sports--

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**The Speaker:**

The hon. member for Vancouver Centre.

\* \* \*

....

## The Budget

The House resumed consideration of the motion that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government, and of the amendment.

....

**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):**

Mr. Speaker, the renewable fuels money of \$2.2 billion really invests in consumption again. Where we should have seen investment in the budget is in conservation because that really does help Canadians. It lowers their cost of energy.

Why does the member say it is so good for the environment when in reality what we need is a conservation program that helps Canadians as well as the environment?

....

**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):**

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleague for a very interesting speech about the financial issues in the budget.

One issue that he did not cover, and which I was having trouble covering, is one that had been brought forward by the finance minister in his speech. It is the discussion about closing the tax loopholes. I went through the whole budget document trying to find out if anything was addressed toward this, trying to find out whether the government had set any targets, identified any areas or was proposing any real solutions for the tax loopholes that exist.

Earlier I heard in the House that there are Canadian assets worth some \$88 billion in offshore companies. This is a huge issue. For the finance minister to say in his speech that he is going to do something about it, without any indication of what that is going to be, where that is going to take us, or what the proposed targets are going to be for that kind of action, is just another case of window dressing.

I would like to ask my hon. colleague, who is on the finance committee and has heard representations on this issue, if he could enlighten me a bit about this.

....

**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):**

Mr. Speaker, it has been a week since the hon. member for Whitby—Oshawa brought forth his second federal budget, a plan to spend \$237 billion, most of it out of the pockets of ordinary Canadians.

Members of another party in the House have described this second work as a shotgun budget, one that scatters money with no clear plan. The fact that the Liberals do not know who is being helped by the budget shows how much they do not get it.

I can say who is not being helped by the budget. Average Canadians do not get much help. Aboriginal people do not get much help from the budget. Only the wealthy and corporations get significant help from the budget.

The \$9 billion corporate tax cut instituted last year continues to provide fatter profits while not requiring reinvestment in the economy. The belief that making the rich richer helps ordinary people is as accurate as the belief that the earth is flat.

In case the finance minister is not aware of it, making the rich richer only makes the poor poorer. If he wants to give large corporations a tax break, he should make it contingent on their investing a portion of their profits back in the economy.

There is only one corporate tax change in the budget that we support. The Conservatives have agreed with the oft stated demand of the NDP to take away the large tax breaks, the accelerated capital cost allowance for oil and gas corporations for the development of the oil sands. Unfortunately, this billion dollar giveaway will not end until 2015. By that time much of the development will be in place at very high oil prices and a very great return.

By taxing to death average Canadians while allowing their corporate friends to pay less and less taxes, the Conservatives, like the Liberals before them, have ended up taking an extra \$14 billion from the pockets of hard-working Canadians. They have dedicated \$9 billion of that to debt repayment, even though Canada has the lowest national debt of any of the G-7 countries. Our economy continues to produce good numbers resulting in huge government revenues, largely by increasing the tax burden on ordinary Canadians over the last 20 years.

Working Canadians have paid to put the government fiscal house in order. That job is done and the benefits should flow back to average Canadians.

The hon. member for Whitby—Oshawa I am sure would say that the budget does return benefits. I am sure he would point to the approximately \$3.1 billion provided to the provinces this year, the so-called fiscal rebalancing. However, did the minister or any of the government members get commitments that this cash gift will result in better programs and services for average Canadians? No, they did not.

We have already seen a Liberal premier promise to make \$700 million in tax cuts to buy votes, a cynical move which makes the rich richer but has others crying foul. Imagine a Conservative government that has used the taxes of average Canadians to help a Liberal get elected.

For aboriginal people the budget is nothing but a disappointment. The new spending for aboriginal people in the budget works out to about \$14 a person but in reality, even this small amount is somewhat tenuous. For aboriginal housing, the budget rededicates \$300 million to the development of a housing market in first nations communities.

To develop a real estate market, one needs to buy and sell land. However, section 20 of the Indian Act says no first nations person is lawfully in possession of land in a reserve. So a real estate market on reserves is a non-starter, of course, unless the government wants to sell off the reserves just like past Conservative governments sold off Métis land. This is where the free market idea of the hon. member for Whitby—Oshawa runs into the hard cold reality of the discriminatory system Canada has imposed upon aboriginal people.

If the government wants to take action on the acute need for housing on reserves, it should be helping with the construction of band owned housing on reserves rather than this fallacy of creating a real estate market. Because Liberals and Conservatives have long turned their backs on aboriginal people, the cost of really improving reserve housing would be far greater than the \$300 million that has been allocated. Unfortunately, even this pittance for housing does not help the vast majority of aboriginal people who live off reserves. Where is the housing support for the people who left their reserves or never had one in the first place?

The real truth about aboriginal poverty is it is government created. The budget trumpets that more than \$9 billion, many say more than \$10 billion, is spent on aboriginal people. However, almost half of that never reaches the first nations, Métis and Inuit at whom it is targeted. If the huge amounts dedicated to the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development actually reached aboriginal people, first nations, Métis and

Inuit there would not be such a thing as poverty in their communities. In their poverty, aboriginal people of Canada are a renewable resource for the bureaucrats at DIAND.

(1745)

The Treasury Board has estimated that \$600 million is spent on overhead each year at the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. That is not only on aboriginal people. Of course, there is northern development. There is a skyscraper full of DIAND bureaucrats in Yellowknife and hundreds of other people working in other offices.

Devolution is required because in the north we can do better. We can do better with the resources that are being held by northern development for our purposes. We could put those people to better use. We want to see devolution move forward more rapidly than the Conservatives have been able to accomplish in their year and a half in government, and the Liberals for many years before that.

The leadership of the Northwest Territories, Yukon and Nunavut have all said how much this budget helps. To be honest, the new formula funding arrangement is better than the formula imposed by the Liberals. I am glad to see the base amount has been increased and that 1985 numbers are no longer being used as the starting point. Updating this figure is just another thing the Liberals could not find the time to do.

I am glad to see a more fair system is being used for calculation of the formula, unlike the perverse system imposed by past governments, but I am concerned that the new formula still uses population in its calculation. Multiplying the average southern cost of a program or service by a territory's population does not reflect the real cost in the north for that program or service.

The government has also agreed to raise the NWT borrowing limit from \$300 million to \$500 million, a move that is long overdue and essential in that the existing borrowing limit is strained with utility and mortgage debt, most owed to the Government of Canada. The borrowing limit still does not match up to that of the city of Yellowknife, which can borrow up to 50% of its assessed value.

For northerners there are many things missing in this budget. For starters, there is not one word about Arctic sovereignty being enhanced. Where are all those Conservative promises that were made during the election? Where is all the concern about the sanctity of our Arctic reflected in this budget?

Where is the relief for northerners from the high cost of living? For some time northern politicians have been calling for an increase in the northern residents tax deduction. I and others have said that the deduction needs to be increased by 50%.

In the budget speech the minister stated how the capital gains exemption was in need of an immediate increase because it had not been changed in 20 years. The northern residents tax deduction has not been changed in that long as well, but then only average Canadians wanted this change, not the business elite.

The northern residents tax deduction changed a bit. The change is a cynical, pork-barrelling addition of the southern part of the government whip's riding. It is shameful to say the least. To put that in the budget without doing a whole program is a waste.

The NWT got no action on resource revenue sharing. The resources of the NWT rival those of nations such as South Africa and the United Arab Emirates, but not one cent of the royalties from the resources help the people of the Northwest Territories. For more than a generation Canada has been saying it is willing to hand over control and ownership of these riches. However, the Conservative government, just like those in the past, continues to delay.

The current excuse is that it needs to restart negotiations. Every day Canada delays fulfilment of this promise is another day that millions of dollars, whether from the diamond mines or the oil and gas fields, are lost to the people of the Northwest Territories. The people of the Northwest Territories do not mind hearing mañana when on vacation in Mexico but are tired of hearing it from Ottawa when it comes to the ownership of resources.

What is really worrying about this budget is on page 186 of the budget plan. On that page the Conservative government lays out its plan for negating its commitments under

the land claims agreements and to silence the voice of northerners when it comes to environmental assessments and determining how development will occur in the north.

According to the budget a law written to implement the portion of land claims where aboriginal people are granted a say in how their land is used must be changed because the pro-industry Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development feels it is too restrictive to large corporations. It is clear that the minister's purpose is to gut the little protection the aboriginal people and other northerners have under the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act, making it open season for rampant exploitation.

It is clear from this statement in the budget that the Conservatives will not let anything get in the way of large corporations exploiting the north, even if it means going back on the word of the Crown.

(1750)

No, this is not a budget for everyone. It is not a budget for hard-working, ordinary Canadians. It is not a budget for aboriginal people, nor is it a budget for the people of the north. It is certainly not a budget I can support.

....

**Mr. Dennis Bevington:**

Mr. Speaker, when the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development was first put into the post here, people in the north remembered what he had said when he was a critic of the Liberal government. People in the north thought there was going to be some movement, that some things would be happening. What we have seen has been almost diametrically opposed to what the minister talked about when he was a critic of the previous government.

The statements that have been made in this Parliament in the last while about the \$10 billion, and the fact that it is going to aboriginal communities, are statements that I cannot agree with and the facts do not agree with them. The way the funds have been distributed, we are not going to see that \$10 billion in the hands of aboriginal people and that is just a simple fact.

....

**Mr. Dennis Bevington:**

Mr. Speaker, where I come from in the north, we have a different form of government. It is not as partisan as it is here, but I do understand budgets and what I see in this budget is an attempt to establish support from another party in this Parliament and not from us.

I did not see this budget as being addressed to attracting support from us. This is a minority Parliament. The Conservative government had the opportunity. We had given our position about what we would like to see in the budget to garner our support, and if the Conservatives chose to go with another party's direction in terms of regional development or in terms of some of the other things that we see in the budget, that is their business.

We wanted to see the prosperity gap reduced. What I wanted to see for the north was a clear definition of what devolution and resource revenue sharing are going to mean. We have not seen that. The Conservatives have had plenty of time. Plenty of the work had been done by the Liberal Party as well.

I cannot support the budget because it did not address the issues that we saw as important.

....

**Mr. Dennis Bevington:**

Mr. Speaker, regardless of what the government said about Kelowna, the situation with aboriginal people remains. Quite clearly we identified with the accord the requirement for

aboriginal people to have a modest chance of moving forward in this society and achieving a better future. That is what we were offering. It was not a panacea. We are not going to change the course of the poverty in this country with a \$5 billion program.

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## **39th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION**

**EDITED HANSARD • NUMBER 131**

**CONTENTS**

**Thursday, March 29, 2007**

**Income Tax Amendments Act, 2006**

The House resumed from February 21 consideration of the motion that Bill C-33, An Act to amend the Income Tax Act, including amendments in relation to foreign investment entities and non-resident trusts, and to provide for the bilingual expression of the provisions of that Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

....

**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):**

Mr. Speaker, I have enjoyed the debate today. I look forward to the bill going to committee so the 500 pages can be reflected on by members in the detail that is required.

Last night I had the opportunity to attend a function put on by people from Nunavik. They were talking about tax fairness, but they were talking about the northern residents tax deduction and the unfairness of that deduction.

I noticed in the 2007 budget the government talks about tax fairness regarding the capital gains exemption. It is suggesting that it be raised from \$500,000 to \$750,000 because it has not been raised for 20 years. The same situation exists with the northern residents tax deduction. It has not been raised for 20 years.

Does the hon. member think that the finance committee in its deliberations on fairness, whether it is foreign taxes or other taxes, could set some standards for the fair development of our tax system so that we can apply these standards in any debate that goes on about taxation and the Canadian public?

....

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## **39th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION**

**EDITED HANSARD • NUMBER 132**

**CONTENTS**

**Friday, March 30, 2007**

**Question No. 183--**

**Mr. Dennis Bevington:**

With regard to the Deh Cho First Nations, how will the government honour its commitments under the Interim Measures Agreement and the Settlement Agreement, particularly Article 13?

**Hon. Jim Prentice (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, CPC):**

Mr. Speaker, as a party to the Dehcho process negotiations, this government continues to work closely and in earnest with the Dehcho First Nations and the Government of the Northwest Territories on the federal offer we tabled on May 30, 2006. Canada's land and governance proposal, which is based on a land selection model, has the settlement of the Dehcho's comprehensive claim in the NWT as its primary objective. It is this government's hope that the Dehcho First Nations will provide their negotiators with a mandate to respond to Canada's offer so that all parties can move towards a final agreement that will replace all interim measures.

....

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## **39th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION**

**EDITED HANSARD • NUMBER 133**

**CONTENTS**

**Monday, April 16, 2007**

**Budget Implementation Act, 2007**

The House resumed from March 30 consideration of the motion that Bill C-52, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 19, 2007, be read the second time and referred to a committee, and of the motion that this question be now put.

....

**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):**

Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate my colleague across on his speech and his focus on the north.

In the budget, fairness was addressed in a number of ways, but I do not think fairness was addressed in terms of the northern residents tax deduction. It was mentioned in this budget but for 18 years, under the Liberals, there were no cost of living increases to the northern residents tax deduction and that has left it in a position where the benefit is not worth nearly what it was in the beginning.

The Conservatives recognized that they needed to raise the lifetime capital gains exemption from \$500,000 to \$750,000 because it had not been done for 20 years. The same thing applies to the tax benefits that should be there for northerners. They did not do anything about it and the Liberals did not do anything about it for 18 years.

I have a question for my hon. colleague. How does he feel about being in a government that ignored this very important part of the northern benefits structure for so many years

and how can he ensure that we get this back on the agenda to make sure that northerners are treated fairly in the tax system for a change?

....

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## **39th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION**

**EDITED HANSARD • NUMBER 134**

**CONTENTS**

**Tuesday, April 17, 2007**

### **Railway Continuation Act, 2007**

....

**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):**

Mr. Speaker, in today's labour market in western Canada there is a crying need for workers in all sectors of the economy, and in my sector in the Northwest Territories. We have the same need for workers and yet we see a reluctance on the part of companies to accept the stability and long term usefulness of unions and the union movement in the country.

There is still a backlash against unionized workers across the country and that is unfortunate. I think it really degrades the potential productivity increases in our society that come from a stable workforce that is well trained and well taken care of in terms of its ability to interact with the employer.

The move that the government is making today by forcing closure and back to work legislation on the rail workers is just another example of the degradation of the labour sector in our economy.

I would ask my colleague this question. How can we continue to do this in the face of the evidence that comes from a stable workforce as being good for the economy and unions being good for providing a stable workforce? This kind of action that has been taken today will once again cause conflict in the labour movement, will degrade its ability to provide the services to its people, and will reduce its bargaining position. How in the long run is this going to work for Canadians? Certainly, that is the question. How is this going to work in the long term for the productivity of our economy?

....

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## **39th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION**

**EDITED HANSARD • NUMBER 136**

**CONTENTS**

**Thursday, April 19, 2007**

**Opposition motion—Afghanistan**

....

**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):**

Mr. Speaker, last year I faced the choice in Parliament to support the mission in Afghanistan or not. I chose not to support it at that time. Since that time, I have read many documents. I have attended forums. I have looked at all the evidence I can and have come to the conclusion that I was right in not supporting the mission, and I will continue, along with my party, not support the mission.

The position the Liberals are adopting with this motion is one that will ask for an end to the mission in 2009 rather than today. This says to the soldiers that whatever happens in Afghanistan they are finished in 2009. How does that make the soldiers feel, who have to continue this mission for another two years—

....

**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):**

Mr. Speaker, I listened with a great degree of interest to the member's speech. He really did speak of a lot of things which I think most members of Parliament could agree are good things that are happening in Afghanistan. However, this motion deals with the counter-insurgency efforts in the south of Afghanistan.

Last year the Dutch as well entered southern Afghanistan in another province. Their approach has been remarkably different. Has the member looked at other approaches to what could have happened in Afghanistan and recognized where the failings of this mission have taken place in south Afghanistan?

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**39th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION**

**EDITED HANSARD • NUMBER 139**

**CONTENTS**

**Tuesday, April 24, 2007**

**Opposition Motion--Greenhouse Gas Reduction Target**

....

**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):**

Mr. Speaker, I would like to make a comment and ask a question of my hon. colleague.

My comment is that the comment on the socialist plan to use trading systems to reduce greenhouse gas emissions is really nonsense. The social democratic countries around the world have the best record in dealing with the reduction of the greenhouse gas emissions, whether it is Germany, Sweden or Denmark. They have done it through very concentrated efforts in their own countries to reduce energy use and to move to alternative energy sources. They have been effective. Social democratic principles



applied to greenhouse gas reductions work very well and the weight of evidence is there in the world.

On the question of emissions reductions, in the oil and gas sector quite clearly Natural Resources Canada says that the emissions intensity of the product we are producing in Canada is going up, whether we like it or not. The sources of natural gas and oil are going to be more carbon intensive. That is a fact.

When we look at emissions reductions and alternatives, what are we going to look at? Is it going to be exporting raw bitumen to the United States to take that problem into another country so that we do not use emissions in its transformation to a usable fuel? Do we import liquefied natural gas and push the emissions from that production offshore as well? Or do we in Canada sit down and do the companion piece to a greenhouse gas strategy, which is a national energy strategy?

Would the member opposite support the effort that we need to understand how our energy system works and how we can make changes in the future? Without it, the potential to achieve Kyoto is limited.

....

#### Opposition Motion—Greenhouse Gas Reduction Targets

The House resumed consideration of the motion and of the amendment.

....

**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):**

Mr. Speaker, my colleague from the Bloc talked very passionately about the need to get off oil and to move society in that direction. However, in Quebec right now an environmental assessment is going on in the development of a liquefied natural gas terminal.

I would like to know whether this imagery of Quebec importing more fossil fuels from the rest of the world fits with his imagery of a Quebec that is moving off oil and becoming more responsible for greenhouse gas emission reductions in this world.

....

**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):**

Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to speak to this issue today. The need for action on climate change is now, which is why the New Democratic Party will support this motion that reads:

That the House call on the government to set fixed greenhouse gas reduction targets as soon as possible so as to meet the objectives of the Kyoto protocol, a prerequisite for the establishment, as expeditiously as possible, of a carbon exchange in Montreal.

This is a good motion and it does not preclude the free enterprise system in developing other carbon exchanges in this country. Interest has been expressed by other cities to have similar things. We may find, as time goes on, that these systems could be developed in a way that would be uniquely Canadian and may include other locations in the country. I know Winnipeg is interested. The motion does not tie our hands in this regard but does push forward with the need to set the targets for achieving Kyoto.

We have worked diligently in committee on Bill C-30 over the past six months in, what I have always considered, a nation-building exercise. We put the ideas from all the parties together and created Bill C-30, a bill that represents the majority view in the House of Commons. It represents a building of a consensus toward an issue that can only be solved through consensus, through the support of all parties, through the recognition that we are working for the betterment of Canada and the world, and that partisan political differences must be cast aside.

Last week the environment minister tried to scare Canadians from taking the needed action on climate change when he painted his doom and gloom scenario before members

of the Senate. That, of course, raised everyone's hackles. Let us look at how realistic his nightmare on green street is.

He said that meeting Canada's greenhouse gas commitments would take a quarter of a million jobs out of the economy. This level of job loss in Canada, according to the minister, would result in economic chaos for Canada. How can he say this when the job loss from the North American Free Trade Agreement resulted in more than four times the number of Canadians who had lost jobs?

According to the Conservatives, NAFTA is good for Canada. Where was their concerns about job losses when the result was greater profit for their business pals? Where was the chaos in the Canadian economy? People worked, they recovered from the job losses and they moved ahead.

....

**Mr. Dennis Bevington:** Some jobs will be lost in transit to an environmentally sustainable economy but many more will be created. However, even more than Canadians losing their jobs, they will lose their future and their grandchildren's future if we lose the intrinsic nature of the stability of our climate and our environment by doing nothing.

The environment minister claims that the cost of electricity will rise by 50%. I guess the minister does not realize just how many other opportunities there are for electricity across the country. Generating electricity with fossil fuels and with oil and coal has, if properly computed, more expensive results than many other forms of energy.

Having hard targets for greenhouse gas reduction will force investments into much more clean, useful, sustainable and long term forms of energy generation. It will improve the use of fossil fuels in terms of cogeneration. It will make a difference to Canada in wind power, hydro, solar, biomass, all those things. It will move them ahead as they can be moved ahead and as they have the opportunity to move ahead.

(1640)

We were in a natural resources committee meeting last week and we heard people from the wind power sector say that we had the ability of 100,000 megawatts within the existing transmission system in Canada. We have that resource available to us. Solar energy is available everywhere in the country. As we use it, as we increase the volume of it, the price will come down and the long term impact on our economy will be very positive. Then we can talk about conservation in the short term.

I heard the member for Fort McMurray—Athabasca, in the Bill C-30 committee, say that he had a geographically challenged area in the country for energy. He said that people had to travel long distances and that they had to use lots of energy to heat and light their homes. Interestingly enough, we did that before 1990 as well. Before 1990, we were a very large energy user. Therefore, in comparison, when we talk about Kyoto, we talk about the reduction of energy in our homes and about the reduction in our transportation system. It is relative to 1990 where we did much the same as we do now.

Canadians are large energy users. Energy was cheap for many years. We use a lot of it. We have great opportunities. The least costly electrical energy right now is the megawatt. The reduction in use of that source of energy will not cost 50% more; it will cost 50% less for the consumer.

The energy minister said that the price of gasoline would rise by more than 60%. Over the last five years, we have seen the price of gasoline go up and down like a yo-yo. That has not stopped our economy. That has not stopped people from getting to and from work. Again, he assumes that average Canadians will not move to cars which use less gasoline or other fuels or increase their use of public transit if the price of gasoline goes up.

The minister must believe that no one will use the measures announced in the recent budget and last year's budget. I am sure the minister is familiar with the law of supply and demand. When the demand goes down, the cost of the supply will go down as well.

As Canadians use less and less gasoline, demand will drop, resulting in a levelling of prices or a drop.

The minister wants to scare us into believing that a doubling of natural gas prices will throw the economy into a tailspin. In the last decade the price of natural gas has gone from \$2 a gigajoule up to \$8. That is a quadrupling of the price of natural gas in Canada. Has the Canadian economy suffered? Has it fallen into chaos? No, it has not. Canadians are extremely adaptable. Our industries are adaptable. They make the moves that are necessary to accommodate increased energy costs, and they have done that.

If the Canadian economy can grow when natural gas prices continue to climb, doubling in price, according to this incredible assumption of \$195 a tonne for carbon tax, which we have to take because the minister has given it to us, the economy will not stop. The economy will continue to grow. We will continue to heat our homes. We may move to other forms of energy, whether it is biomass pellets, or geothermal or solar energy, but we will move ahead. We will continue to move ahead, even in the situation where the minister wants us to go with \$195 a tonne carbon tax.

In Bill C-30, the carbon tax is \$30 and 50% will be returned to the companies if they make the effort to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions and 50% will go into retrofits for people in homes and businesses across the country.

The Conservatives have put forward a retrofit program and over four years it will deliver for about 1% of Canadian homes. It is a good idea, but it is not enough money. If we want to put money into retrofit in Canada, which we need to do and which will help every Canadian that invests in that sort of activity, then we need more money in the programs. Bill C-30 can provide that money. We know we can do better than 1% of Canadian homes over four years.

(1645)

Finally, the minister would have us believe that every one of us would have to shell out an extra \$1,000 a year to take action on climate change. As I have run through the other three conclusions that he drew from his report, this is as erroneous as those. People will adjust to what has to be done. The result may be the other way around, where Canadians will conserve and save themselves \$1,000 a year in energy costs.

Will there be winners in an economy based on the Kyoto reduction principles of greenhouse gas emissions? There will be many winners, as there always are in our economy. Some people will take advantage of the opportunities to do the right thing, to make the right investment, to come up with the right industrial process and to put forward the correct ideas that can drive their municipalities, their provinces, their homes. Winners are always part of an economy in our country.

Who will take a hit then? Who are the people who will be hurt by the Kyoto compliance? Polluters who do not live up to what they have to do. The large multinational corporations, all friends of the Conservatives, will have to finally clean up their mess.

....

**Mr. Dennis Bevington:** It could be American corporations. It could be any other company that invests in this country, or it could be Canadians as well. All corporations have the opportunity to either move forward or not move forward. We will see who has the moxie in their company and who has the wherewithal to do it.

My territory has many multinationals. Some of them come from Australia, from England and from South Africa. They all deal in diamonds. We did not set any standards for them for energy production. They all rely on good old oil to generate their electricity to heat their mines.

We have alternatives in the Northwest Territories. We have demonstrated that. We can provide them all the clean hydroelectric power they want for their facilities. When they are under some pressure to do this, they will do it. If they want the diamonds and the economic activity, they will invest in the clean energy that will make their businesses fit under the Kyoto requirements.

Years ago I had the opportunity, as a mayor in my community, to stand up against the development of the Alberta-Pacific pulp mill in northeastern Alberta. It had proposed a particular setup where it would pollute the river systems, create a lot of damage and affect my community. We fought that and proved our point. The companies were rejected at the environmental assessment. Within two or three months, they came with a solution that reduced the pollution by over 70%.

When I talked to those same companies years later, they said the best thing that happened to them in that process was they were forced to clean up their act. They said that they now had a product with an environmental tag on it. They had a facility that was the best in the world, they were selling their pulp and making money at it.

Sometimes the lesson should be that the fear of progress should never stop one from making progress. Fear does not drive a healthy economy. Fear does not drive nation building. Fear does not create a world of which our children would be proud. The environment minister should not try to scare us. We are not here to be scared. We are here to accomplish something for Canadians.

(1650)

I hope the environment minister will join with us, bring forward Bill C-30, allow it to be debated in the House and show Canadians that when the four parties in this House of Commons work together, we can produce results for Canadians.

The time now is not for timid actions. It is not time to try to scare working Canadians away from what needs to be done. Imagine, in the 1940s, if the minister said that the cost to Canada of fighting the second world war was too much and that it was better to let those fascists have their way. We made a choice to invest in our future.

Like almost 70 years ago, Canada is once again facing a serious threat, a threat to our coastal cities, to our agricultural industry, to the thing that sustains our life, the planet Earth. To deal with this threat, we need cooperative action. We need global action. We cannot turn our backs on the first global treaty that has been signed to initiate a process that will reduce the level of greenhouse gases around the world. We cannot allow the threat of climate change by putting one set of interests ahead of another. We cannot say that because we need to expand the oil and gas industry, we need to use dirtier products to add to our ability to expand. Just like in the second world war, we have to work together on this.

As part of our fight against climate change, we need a national energy strategy as well, which is based on renewable energy and uses an east-west electricity grid to transfer clean energy from one part of Canada to another. At our last convention, the NDP adopted a policy for the creation of a national energy strategy.

Only through cooperative effort and effective planning, such as the development of a national energy strategy, will we be able to successfully meet the challenge of climate change. We cannot simply put into place targets without planning, without telling everyone how are we going to move forward. We have to let them know what are going to invest in to make our future right.

We talk about investing in liquefied natural gas terminals. Choosing to export money and the problem of climate change and bring in another source of fossil fuels for Canadians, is not a solution that should fit for Canadians. We can look at our valuable resources in the tar sands and say that one way to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from these tar sands is to export the raw bitumen, export jobs, export economic opportunities and export pollution. That does not make sense either in a world in which we live. We need to work with our people in the tar sands to ensure the product they provide is clean, it works and it has the desirable attributes that we want from an energy product.

It is time for the environment minister and others in the House, who are not ready to face the challenge, to put away their scare tactics, to work with the rest of us, to work with Canadians and to come together, bring Bill C-30 forward, let us debate it in the House of Commons and let us move forward in that regard.

....

**Mr. Dennis Bevington:**

Mr. Speaker, I would like to respond to the hon. member's comments about the auto industry.

I have driven nothing but North American products most of my life. I invested in another one the other day, a GMC product and it gets 42 miles to the gallon. It is comfortable. It is a nice vehicle.

The auto industry can do a lot better in producing vehicles for us than it is right now. I listened to Mr. Hargrove talk on the radio the other day and explain why we are in the situation we are in with the auto industry right now and why we are making the vehicles that we are.

Yes, mistakes were made. If we consider that we are moving forward on Kyoto, putting our investment in the auto industry into vehicles that do not match up to that, then we have a problem. We need to work on that. We need to ensure that Canadians are building cars that can make the grade in the new economy.

....

**Mr. Dennis Bevington:**

Mr. Speaker, the concept that we are going to have a tax of \$195 a tonne on carbon emissions is just frankly ridiculous. Anyone who is in the energy business, the retrofit business or the renewable energy business, businesses that I am very familiar with, would be jumping up and down at the thought that we would somehow get these kinds of dollars as a tax on carbon emissions.

Within Bill C-30 there are provisions for the \$30 a tonne for carbon going into a bank fund. It is not a tax but it fixes a dollar amount around a particular substance.

....

**Mr. Dennis Bevington:**

Mr. Speaker, I have had a lot of experience in small, remote community energy systems. There are many opportunities there. I look at the community I visited two weeks ago in my own riding, Wha Ti, which is a small Tlicho community. The community wanted to put in a mini hydro system, a one megawatt system that would not only light its homes, but heat them too.

Once we make the move with Bill C-30, once we agree what we are going to accomplish here, these projects will move forward quickly. Once Canada knows the direction it has to move in, right across this country, we will see a flourishing of projects like we cannot believe.

I spent time on the Federation of Canadian Municipalities green fund. I have seen the projects that are available across this whole country. We have a great future ahead if we simply make some decisions here in this Parliament and get going with the new economy.

....

**Mr. Dennis Bevington:**

Mr. Speaker, I am not willing to say that Canada cannot accomplish something. I am not willing to stand here and say that we cannot accomplish the goals that we set out to accomplish. I have more respect for Canadians.

There are many things to do in this country. The government just needs to give the signal and the direction. If we fail in accomplishing our goals in the next four or five years, that will be something. We need to try. We need to move ahead. We cannot simply sit on our butts here.

....

**Mr. Dennis Bevington:**

Mr. Speaker, we can start to invest in energy efficiency today.

I was watching television last night and saw what the Chinese are proposing for 2010 in all their buildings. They propose to reduce 50% of their energy requirements in all of their buildings by 2010. They are pushing forward with a very ambitious program. This is the kind of thing that is reported in our national media. This is the kind of direction that we need to take.

Investing billions of dollars a year in retrofits in our homes and our businesses, where the largest greenhouse gas savings are available to the consumer, to small businesses, are things that are going to return right away. We need to invest in the opportunities that exist for carbon--

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## **39th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION**

### **EDITED HANSARD • NUMBER 141**

#### **CONTENTS**

## **Thursday, April 26, 2007**

### **Opposition Motion—Afghanistan**

....

#### **Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):**

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to support the motion of the New Democratic Party today.

In listening to the comments by members of other parties, particularly the Liberal members, it seems to me that many members in the House do not get the fact that we have headed down the wrong path with this mission in southern Afghanistan.

It is clear as well that the Liberals have flip-flopped on a very significant issue for Canadians. If they were so concerned about our young men and women in uniform, then last year when we had a significant and important moment in the House of Commons, the vote on the extension of the mission, their full caucus would have shown up to provide the needed support. However, that did not happen and here we are again today having this discussion.

Polls show that the majority of Canadians across the country are unsatisfied with the direction we are taking in Afghanistan. The situation is not improving with Canadians. Canadians are saying, in ever increasing numbers, that it is not working.

I showed up for the vote last year. As a new MP, I thought the vote was a very important event in my understanding of Parliament and the importance of what we were doing. I voted against extending the mission in south Afghanistan, the counter-insurgency efforts we were taking, and I am more certain today that I made the right choice.

I have spent time reading about it. I have gone to forums. I have discussed this with people. I have listened to the debates. I have listened to Canadians. I made the right choice last spring, the right choice for Afghanistan, the right choice for Canada and the right choice for the world. The counter-insurgency effort in south Afghanistan is bad for Afghanistan, it is bad for Canada and it is bad for the world.

When we first went into Afghanistan, it was at a time when the western world was reacting to the immense events of 9/11. We were hunting down Osama bin Laden and the al-Qaeda. We turned our backs on the Taliban who were in Washington, negotiating scant

days before the invasion. We went in not to take sides in a war, but to clear up an issue within the country.

Today, young Canadian men and women are dying and being maimed because we have taken a side in the war, a war our military and military experts around the world have said is unwinnable. Like every insurgency that is badly handled, for every civilian we kill and every home we blow up, we make the Taliban stronger. Every time we act aggressively in south Afghanistan we create more enemies than friends.

By focusing mainly on combat operations, we are making the work of those, who we all support in the House, more difficult, those who want to better the lives of Afghan people. By taking a war fighting approach, we make all westerners targets.

By pursuing aggressive counter-insurgency, we turn ourselves into the enemy in many people's minds, people to whom we could be reaching out. They are not all Taliban. They are Pashtun farmers. We were told last summer, in the efforts made in the province, that many of the combatants were not Taliban. They were Pashtun farmers who were rising up because of the unfair nature of the police actions taking place in their province.

Instead of uselessly trying to defeat the Taliban on the battlefield, we should be working to show them that we can provide a better way for them and their families. Rather than offering them death or creating a criminal state as the only way people can survive, let us offer life through peacemaking efforts, like reconstruction and finding economic opportunities for the Afghan nation to prosper.

(1350)

I want to be clear. After nearly 30 years of war, continued fighting is the worst thing that can happen in Afghanistan. For this reason alone, a mission based on combat operations is bad for Afghanistan.

What about for Canada? Since the Korean war, our position in this world has been traditionally that of diplomat and peacemaker. This mission has completely changed that tradition.

How will we regain our international credibility as diplomats and peacemakers when we take on this type of military adventure? How will my grandchildren wear the Canadian flag proudly while travelling around this world, safe under that umbrella, when we behave in this fashion in other countries, where we bomb villages, where we are indiscriminate in our attacks on the enemy?

This mission is bad for Canada. Every Canadian who is killed or wounded in Afghanistan represents a lost opportunity to make our country better. We have fine men and women in Afghanistan who totally provide us with a great sense of reality toward our armed forces. However, the problem for the New Democratic Party is the mission they have been asked to undertake. NDP members want to build a better Canada. We cannot do that by sending young people off to die in an unwinnable war.

This mission is bad for the world. A well known religious leader said these words more than 2,000 years ago, "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God".

War is the greatest waste of resources created by humans. We need leaders who reject war and violence as the key to solving problems. Canada could be a leader, but we cannot be a leader if we believe the main way we can continue in Afghanistan is through counter-insurgency, aggressively pursuing the enemy throughout their villages and farms. We should be showing the world what can be accomplished through non-violent means. We must work toward building trust in Afghanistan. This mission has Canadians destroying that trust.

Because this mission is bad for Afghanistan, because it is bad for Canada and because it is bad for the world, we need to stop and focus our efforts on assisting the people of Afghanistan in a real sense, in a much larger way through diplomacy, reconstruction and redevelopment.

....

**Mr. Dennis Bevington:**

Mr. Speaker, I really hope that in our efforts in this debate we can clarify many of the issues for Canadians.

We cannot afford confusion on an issue about the deployment of our troops in Afghanistan. The majority of the troops in Afghanistan are in southern Afghanistan. They are involved in counter-insurgency efforts. Those are the things that we point to as the main failings in the mission. In order to change, we will have to pull back.

....

**Mr. Dennis Bevington:**

Mr. Speaker, for any armed forces in this world engaged in active combat, the proposition that one will be there for two years, regardless of outcome, and then be removed is patently absurd as well.

Our position to move the troops out immediately is pretty straightforward. This will happen if the motion is supported. The Conservatives have taken the tack that they will wait to find out what happens with the mission and how successful it is before they decide on extensions. We have three distinct positions in the House of Commons. In letting the troops know what we think, our position is pretty clear.

The member's suggestion that these troops should be in an active war zone that they know they will leave, regardless of outcome, in two years is patently unfair.

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## **39th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION**

### **EDITED HANSARD • NUMBER 144**

#### **CONTENTS**

## **Tuesday, May 1, 2007**

### **Opposition Motion--Indian Residential Schools**

....

**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):**

Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for outlining so well the real essential element of an apology for aboriginal people across Canada. I come from a riding where over 50% of the population is first nations, aboriginal people, Inuvialuit and Métis. Many of those people attended residential schools and many suffered grievously.

The issue of compensation goes only so far in their quest to return to normality with a healthy and self-fulfilling lifestyle. Residential schools impacted so many aspects of people's lives, including people's parenting skills. Residential schools affected their ability to understand how to raise their children in the future. It was a terrible impact when people were taken out of their homes and put into an institutional situation for most of their formative years.

I had the opportunity to attend a conference a month ago, led by aboriginal people in Yellowknife, on the question of fully restoring sanity and prosperity in these people's lives. Does the member think an apology by the House will do it all? Do we need an apology from the highest minister in the House directly on this issue?

....



**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):**

Mr. Speaker, my question deals with the truth and reconciliation commission that is being established.

Residential schools are part of the terrible legacy that we have to deal with in terms of our overall treatment of first nations, be it our failure to live up to treaty obligations, be it the lack of support for the development of their structures, or be it their tremendous struggle to establish their own opportunities in the north.

Does the member agree that we need to have northern representation on the truth and reconciliation commission in order to ensure that the stories that are more unique to the far north of Canada are truly represented there?

....

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## 39th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION

### EDITED HANSARD • NUMBER 146

#### CONTENTS

## Thursday, May 3, 2007

### Taxation

[\[Table of Contents\]](#)

**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):**

Mr. Speaker, northern households spend \$15,000 more per year on essentials than other Canadians. Northerners need relief from the high cost of living. Let us make their taxes fair by increasing the northern residents tax deduction.

The Canadian Chamber of Commerce says to make the taxes fair. The Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories voted unanimously to make the tax fair.

When the Minister of Finance increased the capital gains he said it was needed as it had not been changed in almost 20 years. It has been 20 years since the working families in the north got some tax fairness. When will the minister bring tax fairness to the north?



[\[Table of Contents\]](#)

**Hon. Jim Prentice (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, CPC):**

Mr. Speaker, this is a subject which I have certainly spoken about with the premier of the territories.

At this point we are focused on economic development in the north. That is the key to create jobs and employment opportunities. There is the Mackenzie Valley pipeline in particular and the \$500 million socio-economic fund.

This is a government that is committed to the north. The Minister of Finance has been very committed to economic development and prosperity in the north.

\* \* \*

....

## Criminal Code

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-22, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (age of protection) and to make consequential amendments to the Criminal Records Act, be read the third time and passed.

....

**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):**

Mr. Speaker, I congratulate my colleague on an excellent speech on a difficult subject.

I have struggled with this subject as well. I have taken the time in all the touring of my extensive riding to ask at all public meetings that I have had what people think about changing the age of consent. I have asked it in small first nations communities and in many, many different settings. I have asked it in high schools in the last three weeks. I have talked in three different high schools and brought up the subject and asked students what they thought about it.

I have polled my constituents and I find that there is a lot of wisdom in what they said. Among the elders there is very strong support to move ahead with this legislation. The people who perhaps were in residential schools understand how sexual expression from older persons to younger ones could change young people's lives in a way that at the time was not criminal but changed their way of thinking and led to different patterns of behaviour in the future. That was a difficult thing to legislate, to understand how someone who was a teacher, a priest or an RCMP officer could ask a young person to commit to the other person in a way that was exploitive but not criminal.

What we have here is a law that raises the age at which a person can consent to non-exploitative sexual activity. That is important. On the other hand, when I talked to the schools and the young people, there was a strong sense that something was being taken away from them. There is a fundamental conflict in this.

Has my hon. colleague spent time in his riding consulting with the various groups to understand how the different aspects of this work?

....

**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):**

Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that the crux of the matter in the bill lies with the perceived need to ensure that children, young people between the age of 14 and 16, are not interfered in other ways other than the criminal ways that are already covered under the act.

What we are doing is making a decision about the nature of exploitation that is above criminality. I think that is the key to this discussion. We are saying that under our Criminal Code there is exploitation of young people between the age of 14 and 16 that is not criminalized now and needs to be criminalized.

What we have done, with very broad strokes, is to say that every relationship is criminal because obviously we have missed some in the way we are judging society now.

I would ask my hon. colleague to comment on the kinds of behaviours that he sees as being exploitative now and that should be criminalized, which make the fundamental point within the bill?

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## 39th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION

EDITED HANSARD • NUMBER 148

## CONTENTS

# Monday, May 7, 2007

## Northern Residents Tax Deduction

[\[Table of Contents\]](#)

**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):**

Mr. Speaker, last week in question period I asked when the Conservatives were going to bring some tax fairness to northern families by increasing the northern residents tax deduction, something that has not been done for 20 years.

The Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development responded that instead of helping ordinary northerners with the high cost of living the government is focusing on development. If the minister wants to encourage northern development across the country, giving northern families some fairness would go a long way to doing that.

The north's high cost of living slows down development for a simple reason. Since everything costs more, business margins have to be larger. This means that small and medium size businesses cannot compete. Unfortunately, the minister feels that the only way to develop the north is to give his friends in large southern corporations all the help while doing nothing for ordinary people and businesses in the north.

Increasing the northern residents tax deduction would help northern working families with the high cost of living and spur on economic development in Canada's north. Let us close the northern prosperity gap.

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## 39th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION

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## CONTENTS

# Tuesday, May 8, 2007

Opposition motion--Gas Prices

The House resumed consideration of the motion, and of the amendment.

....

**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):**

Mr. Speaker, I will make my comments brief because I know that time has been taken up.

The hon. member talked about carbon sequestration. At the natural resources committee, we had many presentations on this. The industry is admitting that by 2015, using the logen project, it perhaps could sequester about 25 megatonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>. That is about one-quarter of the production from the tar sands. This is the investment that is

actually going to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from the tar sands over a period of time? I do not think so.

Does the minister have any other answers that could work with the tar sands, other than a more rational development of these great resources?

....

**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):**

Mr. Speaker, we have heard from the Conservatives, especially the Minister of Natural Resources, a kind of defeatism here today. The Liberals tried to do this six times and they could not make it happen. They could not examine an industry in Canada and come up with conclusions and directions that we could take to improve the industry so it delivered for the consumer. That is what I hear from the Minister of Natural Resources.

How does my colleague think this attitude of defeatism fits in with the new Conservative government's general demeanour of aggressiveness toward the Liberal Party?

....

**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):**

Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise to speak to this opposition day motion that would put together a rather important plan to give consumers security around the cost of a product that is of course a world market commodity. Crude oil has a limited ability to be refined within Canada and seems to move with the rapidity of lightning in its price range.

We have heard these complaints over and over again. We have seen inaction from the previous government because it had a laissez-faire attitude. Certainly, we would hope better from this government and in a minority government situation we would hope that the majority in the House would have the opportunity to make a difference.

Earlier today I spoke to reporters about the northern prosperity gap faced by working families across the north due to the high cost of living. High gasoline and energy prices are just two things that contribute to the high cost of living that northerners face on a regular basis.

A little over two weeks ago I was back in my home town of Fort Smith, which is the most southern community in the Northwest Territories. It has excellent road access and the price of gasoline was \$1.20 a litre. I received a phone call from my daughter last night and she was outraged at the fact that the price of gasoline at the pump had gone to \$1.31. This community, located some 800 miles away from the Strathcona refinery in Alberta, had seen a larger increase than most other places.

To me this suggests something about petroleum monitoring agencies. It would be very important for this country to have an agency that could look at not just the price of gasoline in the large cities, but the smaller communities across Canada, in the north and rural Canada, the communities that do not have a plethora of gas stations that perhaps are competitive but have to deal with one or two outlets in their own particular communities.

The situation is that the price of gas goes up 5¢ in Edmonton and nothing has changed in Fort Smith. The cost of transporting the fuel there has not changed. The wages for the person in the gas station have not changed. However, the price in Fort Smith goes up twice as much as it does in Edmonton. This is intolerable in any situation.

People expect that there would be some rationale in the pricing of a product that is delivered to their communities. In Parliament we should certainly look at ways to protect the consumer at all levels of society. I trust that a petroleum monitoring agency would have the opportunity to look at not only the larger picture but at the situations in various regions of the country.

Lower gas prices are something that all northerners want and I suppose all Canadians want as well. The NDP supports the effort to ensure that the day to day fluctuation in the price of gas is not conspiratorially exploited, that it is actually the cost of the product reflected in the price.

Every one of us in the country recognizes that oil is a world market commodity and will rise and fall, and that will cause changes in the price of the retail product. We can all accept that. We can all accept as well the deliberate act of government to ensure that we reduce greenhouse gas emissions through the development of hard targets over the next few years.

(1700)

Interestingly enough, a poll was done in Alberta and some 70% of Albertans were in favour of hard targets for emission reductions. That speaks well of Albertans who understand the industry and understand the enormous problems that industry will face in the future, but they are not giving up on it. Albertans are not like that. They do not give up on problems. They recognize them and work to solve them, I hope, in the future. The leadership we are hearing from Alberta, though, is far behind the people of Alberta.

Higher gas prices are a symptom of a much larger disease. It will be more and more apparent in Canada as time goes on. Really, to solve the larger problem, we need to look at a national energy strategy in this country. We need to look at how we deal with energy as a whole. We will not get to a situation of reduced emissions for Kyoto without it and we will certainly not control prices and control the economy as far as energy costs go without some kind of nationally recognized strategy with buy-in from all the provinces and territories.

Recently, people in Ontario saw gas prices rise because a fire damaged part of a refinery. The fact that a fire at one refinery results in gas shortages and high prices shows a system for delivering fuel for consumers in trouble. There is no excess capacity and the likelihood of getting more excess capacity is limited.

We need to look at conservation. The primary goal of any national energy strategy today and into the future has to be conservation.

The government has come out with a number of solutions for climate change. One of them was renewable fuels. We are seeing an investment of \$2.2 billion over seven years into renewable fuels. It is a great thing for farmers, a great thing for the agricultural industry, but not really a great thing for conservation. Renewable fuels are not part of a conservation cycle. They are part of a demand cycle. They will continue the demand.

The investment of \$2.2 billion in conservation practices, in reducing the use of automobiles, the increase in public transit, the ability to change the way we are dealing with the movement of our goods, services and persons across this country is much more toward the conservation side.

In fact, the jury is still out on the ability of renewable fuels to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, their ability to reduce smog in the cities and all these things. That part of the Conservative platform, although interesting and useful in some respects, is really not a conservation strategy and certainly the door is still wide open as to whether it is a useful tool in reducing air pollution or greenhouse gas emissions.

What we have is a situation where we are continuing the consumption orientated economy of this country, and that will not work. We know the world is running out of oil. We know that we are in a finite situation with oil and if we put it on a cost curve, we are rapidly approaching a point where the costs will escalate past many alternatives that are in place.

Where do we go with it? If we continue in the way that the Liberals set out 13 years ago on energy with a laissez-faire system, let the industry decide how much energy will develop, how it will move ahead, we will end up with situations like we have today.

I will use natural gas as an example. It was very interesting to hear at the natural resources committee the other day that the president of the Canadian Gas Association admitted that by 2015 we will be looking at 20% of our supply from liquefied natural gas. This is an individual who represents the sale of natural gas through its distribution system. He is not trying to frighten customers away. He is facing the reality of the situation that we have incurred under the laissez-faire policies of the last 13 years.

(1705)

The Alliance pipeline was sized to a point where it has forever altered our ability to provide natural gas for our own market. It has also taken away most of the available expansion in the petrochemical industry through the movement of raw gas through Chicago.

These were decisions that were made for the future of the country in the absence of any significant strategy, without understanding the nature of how those decisions would play out in the future.

To think that we would continue this pattern of accepting that industry is going to make the decisions for us about energy, I look at the Mackenzie gas pipeline right now. There is a lot of trouble with that project. It is a \$16 billion project. Imperial Oil is saying it is too much money and it looks like it is going to have to go to LNG for the supply. Interestingly enough, Exxon, the parent company is heavily involved with liquefied natural gas in Qatar. We have a situation where one of these multinationals has two conflicting interests on the supply of energy to Canada. Where do we as Canadians sit, with no input, with no direction? We are simply going to allow this to play out as it may.

Every other energy exporting country has taken a stronger nationalist approach than Canada has taken. Every other country engaged in the business of exporting energy being, as the Prime Minister says, part of the energy superpowers of the world, has taken hold of its resources. What we saw in Venezuela recently was a complete state takeover of oil.

Within the national energy strategy there is the conservation and development of renewable energy. We heard the Minister of Natural Resources talk about the great amount of renewable energy that the government has promised. Four thousand megawatts sounds like a lot but it is not really.

The Canadian Wind Energy Association says that there are 100,000 megawatts of wind energy available to the existing grid within distance of the existing transmission system. That is renewable energy. There is hydro power and the opportunities for much more use of solar energy. Our solar energy ability is great.

On biomass, we are facing a crisis in the forests where our product is being downgraded. The bugs and climate change effects are destroying our forests. We need an active forest program. We need to move more heavily into biomass energy.

Part of that would be an east-west energy grid. We need to link this country together so that it works better for renewable energy. There is no way we can operate in isolation as we have province to province in dealing with energy. We need a national strategy. We need to move ahead with this.

We can sit here and talk about reducing greenhouse gas emissions for four years or ten years, but without a national energy strategy that changes the way we use energy, we will not achieve those larger targets that are coming in 10, 15 or 20 years.

This is a good idea, a petroleum monitoring agency, using the Competition Bureau to ensure that Canadians have some trust in what they are doing, but this is only part of the picture. We need a bigger look at this. We need to have an expanded view of the country's energy system. Parliament is the only one that can do it. If we forsake this role, we are forsaking the future of our children and grandchildren.

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## **39th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION**

### **EDITED HANSARD • NUMBER 151**

#### **CONTENTS**

**Thursday, May 10, 2007**

**Question No. 191--**

**Mr. Dennis Bevington:**

With regard to the cancellation of the flight information centre in Yellowknife, what was the rationale for deciding to cancel the establishment of this centre and how will aviators in northern Canada receive reliable flight information from a centre in North Bay, Ontario?

**Hon. Lawrence Cannon (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, CPC):**

Mr. Speaker, Nav Canada is responsible for the operation of air navigation services, ANS, in Canada. Transport Canada is responsible for the safety as well as regulatory oversight of the provision of ANS. Oversight activities include but are not limited to regular inspections and audits of Nav Canada operations and an ongoing monitoring of all ANS activities. A flight information centre, FIC, is a centralized air traffic service unit that provides flight information services to pilots, including weather briefings, flight planning and remote and enroute radio communications.

The rationale to offer FIC services to the Yellowknife area from the North Bay FIC was a Nav Canada decision. North Bay employs highly skilled flight service specialists, providing what Transport Canada assesses to be a safe and reliable service. In addition, Yellowknife continues to have a flight service station which is an on-site air traffic service unit, which provides aerodrome advisory services and aviation weather observations. Transport Canada conducted an audit both of the Yellowknife flight service station, in September 2006, and North Bay FIC, in December 2006, where it was determined that both units are providing a safe and adequate service to the users.

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## **39th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION**

**EDITED HANSARD • NUMBER 156**

**CONTENTS**

**Thursday, May 17, 2007**

**Criminal Code**

....

**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):**

Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest to my hon. colleague's points in his presentation. I was taken by the story about the policeman. What I am considering now is that right across this country we are arming more of our peace officers, our park wardens and our border guards. I am thinking to myself that in reality these people must uphold the law at least to the extent that every other Canadian citizen must. In the case of those who are empowered to carry a firearm, they must act with complete regard for the law.

I am thinking of the case of a police officer who shot at someone and was charged for it. He obviously had done it outside the law. He grazed the person, but he could well have killed somebody there, and there has to be some deterrent for that as well. There has to

be some understanding that leniency is not given simply because one is in a position of authority in this country. There is no leniency given to endangering other people's lives.

The effects of this law are going to be profound for people who carry lawful firearms, but there are important considerations that we must take into account as well in the protection of our citizens and their rights.

Does the hon. member across not consider that whether a policeman shoots somebody unlawfully or an ordinary person shoots somebody unlawfully, the end result is the same, with the victimization of both the person who was shot and his or her family?

....

**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):**

Mr. Speaker, in reality, what we clearly need to do in this Parliament in the near future is to concentrate on crime prevention.

The continuation of some of the things we do in this country as a result of the ill-fated war on drugs that has been going on for the past 30 years has driven up the crime rate to an unbelievable extent. It centres around the activities of human beings and their needs and desires. It has created a situation where we built the criminal industry to a degree that is unprecedented for one particular substance or another in our society.

Does the hon. member not think that in the future we in Parliament should be looking at crime prevention? Should we not be looking at ways to take the oxygen out of the criminal industry and look at ways that we can rationalize the behaviour of people in society so that the use of heavy sentences is not the prime consideration of Parliament?

....

**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):**

Mr. Speaker, I followed the logic and the desire of my hon. colleague, the member for Wild Rose, to be simplistic, but it does not seem to follow in terms of crime.

His party has insisted on continuing a war on drugs when we know does not work. It just creates more crime, more criminals, more shootings and more trouble in the homes and the neighbourhoods of this nations. An enormous percentage of the population makes choices about what kinds of substances they indulge in and we make crimes against some of them. We make it criminal for some of those things, so we create crime.

Does the hon. member agree with me that we should look at our laws to see if they are working to reduce crime or to eliminate it? When we take those choices, then we can also look at how tough we can enforce the—

....

**Mr. Dennis Bevington:**

There you go, you lose your simplistic argument.

....

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## **39th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION**

**EDITED HANSARD • NUMBER 157**

**CONTENTS**

**Friday, May 18, 2007**



# Mackenzie Gas Project

[Table of Contents]

**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):**

Mr. Speaker, according to a report in yesterday's *Financial Post*, talks are under way which may result in the federal government becoming a major partner in the Mackenzie gas project. If this is so, then Canada must, as part of its participation, insist on the development of an overall industrial strategy for the Mackenzie Valley.

Government and industry have called the pipeline a basin opening project. Unfortunately, instead of an overall guiding plan for the careful development of the pristine Mackenzie Valley, the Liberals and Conservatives have allowed the huge multinationals a free rein.

If the hard-earned dollars of ordinary Canadians are to go to support this project, then it only makes good business sense to have a long term vision for the future.

In the private sector it is well known that failure to plan means planning to fail.

Our territory needs to be developed sustainably, carefully, with a maximization of benefits to Canadians and northerners, and with full protection of our environment.

\* \* \*

....

## Opposition Motion—The Environment

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

....

**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):**

Mr. Speaker, I want to address my hon. colleague whose riding actually borders on mine. I live in the community next to the border of his constituency so I, too, understand the nature of air emissions from the McMurray tar sands and I have dealt with them for years.

The Conservative Party's plan for the next five years is to just simply allow these emissions to increase. My hon. colleague speaks of his daughter with asthma. My concern is what is going to happen in this region if we allow the kind of development that is in place now to increase by fivefold. In the next 10 years, the air emission increases are going to be extraordinary. The health problems of northerners and people from northern Alberta are going to increase.

How does my hon. colleague feel that his plan is justified for the people of the region that he represents: the people, not the corporations?

I will remind my hon. colleague that in a recent poll in Alberta, 70% of Albertans were in favour of hard caps on emissions from industrial developments.

....

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# Thursday, May 31, 2007

### International Trade

....

**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):**

Mr. Speaker, it seems as we move along with the trade agreements we signed many years ago that some of these issues still are not resolved.

I had the opportunity to make a presentation to an environmental assessment panel in Quebec City this winter on the relationship of energy to NAFTA in terms of the liquefied natural gas imports proposed for Quebec. Once again, there is no clarity on the nature of some of these products under these trade agreements.

Does my hon. colleague not agree with me that it is very important to push forward with our position on products, goods and services and to put our case forward as strongly as possible from the government and this Parliament to ensure that our trading partners understand where we are coming from? That is what I think this effort from the committee is working toward and it is certainly something that should be supported.

....

International Trade

### [Routine Proceedings]

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

....

**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):**

Mr. Speaker, the hon. member spoke about the international trade committee and the problems that the committee had the other day with the witness. I was at that committee meeting as well and it was very clear to me that the witness was speaking to the subject and was a Canadian expert on the subject in terms of energy security as it fit under the SPP.

For the witness to be characterized in that fashion in the House of Commons, I simply cannot agree with that. The witness was speaking to a matter of great significance to Canadians, that of energy security. How it fits under the security and prosperity partnership is extremely important to Canadians right across this country at this time. For that witness to be muzzled by the committee chair was inappropriate. How does my hon. colleague see that the subject of energy security did not fit under the topic that was being discussed at the committee?

....

**Mr. Dennis Bevington:**

Mr. Speaker, it is a rare occasion when a New Democrat gets to ask the parliamentary secretary a couple of questions.

He talked about the tar sands and the level of protection for the water but he ignored the fact that there is an exemption on air pollution from the tar sands that is moving forward under his government's bills. He is ignoring one of the main sources of pollution that ends up in our water stream from the tar sands, which is the air pollution that eventually settles on the land and then works its way into the water system.

With the expansion of these oil sands without proper controls over air emissions of NO<sub>x</sub>, SO<sub>x</sub> and volatile organic compounds into the atmosphere, which will eventually end

up in the water stream, does the member not admit that this will be one of the largest sources of pollution in his own region of the country over the next 20 years?

....

**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):**

Mr. Speaker, standing here among the supposed conspiracy theorists of this party, I look upon what the hon. member for Kootenay—Columbia is talking about. He is saying that the sky is falling, that we cannot discuss anything about our trade agreement because it will throw it all open and catastrophe will strike us, that we will be slowed down in our trade deals, leaving the Canadian people homeless and hapless. That kind of rhetoric does not work in this Parliament. It does not work to call us conspiracy theorists either.

I had the opportunity to speak to an environment assessment panel on liquefied natural gas in Quebec. We raised the point about proportionality and the fact that it was not understood how this works in Canada. The chairman agreed with me. He said that we would have to make a ruling on this because it has not been done. That was the third environmental assessment on liquefied natural gas in Canada. We are taking a product into Canada and we still do not know how it affects our trade deals.

Why should we not be dealing with the issues in Canada that affect us, whether they are attached to trade deals or not?

When it comes to water, Canadians want answers about how these trade deals affect our water supply and the future of our lakes and rivers. Let us get on with it.

Does my hon. colleague agree that this is what the recommendation is about and it is not about causing a catastrophe in the Canadian trade system?

....

## Canada Elections Act

The House resumed from May 30 consideration of the motion that Bill C-55, An Act to amend the Canada Elections Act (expanded voting opportunities) and to make a consequential amendment to the Referendum Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

....

**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):**

Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to the speech by the member for Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre. I do not agree with him that the government is doing everything it can to increase voter turnout in Canada. The photo ID bill that was passed earlier this year will hinder voter turnout. For the sake of a few fraud cases that we have had in the last four elections, we are making a tremendous restriction on people's ability to go into the voting booth and cast their vote on election day.

The second thing I point out to the member is this. We do not have to be naive enough to think that if we have an eight hour voting period on the day before voting day, this will not turn into a two day voting exercise. When we do that, we will have a situation where we are able to advertise and promote candidates on the day when a large number of people cast their ballots. Therefore, we will have interference in the democratic system if we do not change the regulations surrounding the ability to advertise on that Sunday prior to the vote.

That is one of the problems. The other problem is we are extending this voting period over two days, we are extending it into a day of rest, we are extending it to a point where difficulties will occur with people in terms of their ability to respond.

The bill has many flaws in it which need to be approached very carefully. Many people have experience in election campaigns. We understand the nature of the election day

machine. When we extend it over two days, how will that impact on parties and resources

—

....

## Mackenzie Valley Gas Project

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**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):**

Mr. Speaker, yesterday Rex Tillerson, Exxon's chief executive officer, said in Dallas that unless there were significant royalty and tax breaks, they were going to shelve the Mackenzie Valley gas project.

Instead of handing out corporate welfare to a company that just posted its largest profit ever this year, I have a suggestion for the minister. Government should become a partner in the project as it is a partner in the Norman Wells oil field. Every year the Norman Wells oil field has returned very significant revenues to Canadians. This is the type of government involvement we need in the oil industry. We do not need more giveaways.

With the federal government as a partner, average Canadians can actually see a return on their investment rather than the loss they would see by handing over more tax and royalty breaks to an industry that already gets over a billion dollars in concessions.

Properly developed, the Mackenzie project could be in the national interest, but Canada cannot allow itself to be bullied into giving more corporate handouts. Rather, if Exxon wants taxpayer money, we should see a return on the investment.

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Friday, June 1, 2007

### Canada Elections Act

The House resumed from May 31 consideration of the motion that Bill C-55, An Act to amend the Canada Elections Act (expanded voting opportunities) and to make a consequential amendment to the Referendum Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

....

**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):**

Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his speech, but I did find the Bloc position on this to be somewhat contradictory. I do feel that in relation to his concern about maximizing voters, many people do not carry the kind of identification that is required to vote.

The Bloc, by supporting the bill earlier on has actually disenfranchised voters and made it more difficult under some kind of an illusion that there is a massive voter fraud going on in the country.

At the same time, we are now pushing forward on a bill that would basically create a two day voting period. The first day, of which many people would take advantage, would be a day when advertising is allowed, where parties could take advantage of the opportunity to perhaps put forward issues that are new and that cannot be countered on the Sunday before the vote.

We would have a situation where parties, through their advertising, are going to be able to fool the voters when a massive number of voters are going forward to vote.

Right now we have a system where on the particular voting day there is no advertising allowed. Does the hon. member believe that we should extend that for the Sunday as well because of course this will become a two day voting period?

....

## Northern Development

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**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):**

Mr. Speaker, many times I have brought a voice to northern concerns about the industrial development of the Mackenzie Valley. Northerners are not opposed to development, but not at the expense of our pristine wilderness. Implementing the NWT's protected areas strategy, including areas as the Ramparts and the Horn Plateau, would show the people of the north that the government takes them seriously.

On January 31 the minister committed to move forward with his cabinet colleagues on protecting large areas of the NWT under the protected areas strategy. It is five months since he made this commitment. When will the people of the north see the action promised?

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**Mr. Brian Jean (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, CPC):**

Mr. Speaker, the extension of the pipeline infrastructure northward up the Mackenzie Valley is, in my opinion, in the national interest.

Indeed, how it happens, when it happens, who builds it, and at what rate of return is fundamentally driven by private marketplace forces. We will continue, as a government, to work for Canadians and to work with all stakeholders in the best interests of Canadians.

\* \* \*

....

## National Parks

[\[Table of Contents\]](#)

**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):**

Mr. Speaker, I think the answer was a little off topic.

Another action the minister committed to was the expansion of the Nahanni National Park Reserve. The Nahanni has been recognized by UNESCO as a world heritage site. However, the current park reserve only covers a small part of the Nahanni watershed. By expanding the park's boundaries, more of this important area will be protected.

When will northerners see action on protecting this unique and special ecosystem?

[\[Table of Contents\]](#)

**Mr. Mark Warawa (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC):**

Mr. Speaker, we have worked with the member and a number of my colleagues in this House regarding the Nahanni. It is a beautiful part of Canada. We look forward to continuing to work on the Nahanni with the other members.

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## **39th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION**

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**Monday, June 4, 2007**

**Budget Implementation Act, 2007**

\* \* \*

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C-52, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 19, 2007, as reported (with amendment) from the committee.

....

**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):**

Mr. Speaker, it is my duty and pleasure to speak again on the budget and try to reveal to Canadians the truth in regard to some of these allegations that have been thrown around over the course of this debate taking place this morning and throughout the rest of the day.

Certainly we have heard ad nauseam from the Liberals about the role of the New Democratic Party in the income trust fiasco. I want to go back through it for members and give a little history lesson. Income trusts have been in place for a while. The previous finance minister, in September 2005, gave indications of his sense that they were not going quite right. That caused a great disruption in finance fields in this country and eventually led the Liberals, over the course of the next few months, to come up with a different position, such that they kept income trust legislation intact through the federal election of 2006.

I think it is pretty clear that when the Conservatives got in they had supported the income trust legislation as well. The Prime Minister, in his comments during the election, certainly indicated that he was fully supportive of income trusts and the people who were engaged in them. He made some very valiant and self-serving statements during the election campaign about how he was going to continue to do this.

However, once the Conservatives assumed power, had full access to the finance department and understood the nature of what was going on with income trusts, their mood began to change. This change in mood took a while to build as a political entity, because of course we could not have this happening overnight. However, over the course

of time and over the last year, the Conservatives came to the realization they had to move on income trusts, so they did, and in this budget they made those moves.

We in the NDP, who of course have been opposed to the concept of income trusts from the very beginning, were fine with what was happening here. We recognized its importance for fairness in the tax system and for the real need to ensure that we were going to collect full revenue from the variety of sources investing in our country, including people within the country.

Today we have the Liberals trying to make time on this issue. They are trying to work harder on this issue to make it appear as though there is a groundswell of bitterness and discontent over this issue across the country. We have all received emails that are very similar in nature and scope. They come to us over and over again in our email boxes from purported hordes of people who are concerned about the income trusts, and quite rightly, because many Canadians took a hit over the income trusts.

Really, these Canadians trusted those two other parties to fully represent the issues to them in a clear and precise manner. They thought the truth was there for them and they invested, but really it was not there and the nature of the income trusts was such that they could not proceed forever.

That is the historical nature of the income trust debate here in Canada. I certainly would like all in this House, and whoever may be listening, to understand that the only party that has had a consistent position on this is the New Democratic Party. We take some pride in that.

(1345)

It is important that there is consistency in what we do. If we make a mistake, we have to acknowledge it. That is certainly something that the party to my left here needs to do. It is probably a little more to my right, but it sits on my left, and it certainly needs to do a little soul-searching in terms of its apologies to the people of this country for some of the obvious mistakes it made during the election campaign. That does not take away from the importance of what had to be done and now has been done.

As a new MP I have been quite interested in listening to the argument and debate over tax loopholes that has gone on in this Parliament. It is certainly encouraging to see that the budget contains elements that may actually address some of these issues. What the Conservatives were talking about was not very well outlined in the budget, but we certainly got the sense that they would like to pursue reducing the tax loopholes that are available in this country. That is something with which the Liberals had a great degree of difficulty for many, many years, even though, as we have seen, many, many reports told them to do exactly that, to reduce those loopholes, and they did not do it.

Once again, perhaps out of this will come a sense of more fairness in the tax system. We will wait and see what the Conservatives do with what they said in the budget they would do.

After I listened to the debate this morning, those are the tax issues that I thought needed some clarification.

The issue on which I tend to focus as energy critic is the need for an energy strategy in Canada. This budget clearly demonstrates that. We are spending money in areas such as renewable fuels, with \$2.2 billion over seven years. It is not really about renewable energy, because by and large the program is about providing some further future methods of subsidy for farmers and for that approach. That is fine, but in terms of greenhouse gas reduction it really represents a very small amount of greenhouse gas reduction for a very large expenditure of government funds. As well, as we have seen lately in some of the reports and in the scientific information that has come out, even in terms of air emissions the move toward renewable fuels does very little to reduce smog.

We have seen a large expenditure of government funds for a purpose that I think we all sort of support, but really it is not tied to what arguably in the first effort of any energy strategy is energy efficiency and conservation.

Leading that back to our auto industry, an investment of some of that money, some of those large capital sums, in retooling our auto industry would mean that it could start to compete for the small scale automotive highly efficient vehicle market that will develop

over the next number of years, and that would probably achieve much more return for the economy and for greenhouse gas reductions and the reduction of smog and air pollution.

In the absence of this energy strategy, which looks at all the issues and puts them together in a fashion such that we can see the logical progression forward of our economy and society, the budget, in its dealings with energy issues and climate related issues linked to energy, has not really accomplished what I think all of us are looking for in the expenditure of public funds. I will not go into a lot of other examples of that.

(1350)

I will wrap up by saying that the NDP clearly did not support this budget. It was supported by the Bloc and has moved forward. It has a more regional aspect, while I think that most of us in the NDP would have liked to see more directed programs. That did not happen. We will continue not to support the budget, but in the spirit of working together in Parliament we will try to find solutions that can be put forward in the future.

....

**Mr. Dennis Bevington:**

Mr. Speaker, quite clearly there is concern about the mature nature of our oil and gas fields in the western Canada sedimentary basin. We should all be very concerned about them, because as those resources move to depletion, we are going to be taking on much more difficult energy solutions, much more carbon intensive energy solutions, and solutions that are not always going to work to Canada's benefit.

The ability to develop those mature fields certainly has some interest for me, but once again, in terms of an energy strategy for Canada, one where we bring the industry to the table so that we can understand what it sees as the proper vehicle for ensuring that the mature fields are completely run out, which is what I suppose most of us would like to see, I would wait until we have that kind of debate where all the options are put on the table.

To say that the vehicle that was designed for this is working pretty well on this road does not suggest there are not other things that would be more appropriate to do and to put on the road to carry forward.

....

**Mr. Dennis Bevington:**

Mr. Speaker, perhaps I will touch on the forestry issue, because the NDP was not in favour of the softwood lumber deal. We saw that as a job losing proposition, which is exactly what it was. The investments that forest companies are making now are in sawmills across the border in the United States. Raw log exports are on the way up. The Canadian worker is going to suffer as a result.

We did not see anything in the budget that could change that rather alarming state of affairs in the forest industry in terms of employment. There was nothing in the budget that could possibly curtail that, other than perhaps a quota on raw log exports or offering up incentives such as making these raw log exports tariff free and putting them under the same tariff as lumber. That might have changed the nature of the softwood lumber deal. It might have made it one that was more in favour of keeping production in Canada.

....



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### Wednesday, June 6, 2007

Taxation

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**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):**

Mr. Speaker, I rise on an issue that I raised in question period a number of weeks ago. I have raised this issue many times in the House of Commons. It deals with the fairness in the tax system as it applies to the northern residents tax deduction.

I have made the point over the year that this northern residents tax deduction, which was put in place by the Conservative government in the late eighties to assist northerners with the high cost of living, has remained at the same level throughout 20 years.

The benefit from this program has degraded over that time. We really need to see some fairness put into this program and see that the northern residents tax deduction be brought forward and raised at least by the amount of inflation over the period of the 20 years.

I would note as well that in the federal budget this time the issue of fairness was raised as it concerned the capital gains exemption for small businesses. It, too, had been in place for 20 years and was put in place at a half a million dollars. In the new budget, it was raised to \$750,000 under the policy of fairness to the people who would of course get the benefit from that capital gains exemption.

So, we have seen that fairness is a part of the Conservative rhetoric on the budget. I would hope that the Conservatives would consider it when it comes to this very important part of the tax system to northerners.

When I speak of northerners, I am not speaking simply of my riding, the Northwest Territories, but also Yukon, Nunavut and of course many of the northern ridings that stretch across the provinces in the north. There are quite a number of ridings that have residents who are affected by and take advantage of the northern residents tax deduction.

When it was introduced, the policy objectives of the northern residents tax deduction were to create a stable and trained resident workforce in the north. The disincentives to this were, of course, the high cost of living.

I do not have to raise this too much here, but the cost of living in the north, across northern isolated communities across this whole country, is extremely high. In some cases, it is twice that of southern Canada and even higher than that in many cases.

Although there may be high wages for some people in northern situations, those wages have not made that much of a difference because, as the progressive tax system in Canada works, the higher wages, the more taxes paid.

Due to the high cost of living, northerners are also taxed more through the consumption tax known as GST. The cost of goods are more. Northerners are paying more for the basic cost of living, so they are paying more for the taxes that are applied to that cost of living through the GST.

There is also reduced access to goods and services. So, when people do purchase items in the north, when they look for services, they by and large have to pay much more than southern Canadians.

Of course, the additional costs that come from the extreme climate conditions in the north, for example, in Tuktoyaktuk--

....

**Mr. Dennis Bevington:**

Mr. Speaker, the figures surrounding the territorial formula financing are one thing, but the cost of living to northerners remains the same. When we look at the cost of living in comparison to other places, then we begin to understand why the system was initiated in the first place. It has not kept up with inflation, which means more of a burden on northerners. It has been more of a burden on employers up north.

In every case, economic development is being stymied in the north because of the lack of employment in some cases. The opportunities in economics have to reside with the individual taxpayer—

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## 39th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION

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## Tuesday, June 12, 2007

#### Third Reading

The House resumed from June 11 consideration of the motion that Bill C-52, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 19, 2007, be read the third time and passed, and of the motion that this question be now put.

....

**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):**

Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak in this shortened debate. I guess I am privileged to speak to the budget, no thanks to the Bloc members. Over the years when it has been in their interests, they have always spoken against closure and here they are supporting closure. I find that to be rather self-centred.

Yesterday I was amused to listen to the hon. member for Fort McMurray—Athabasca castigate me for supporting political games on the budget. We should consider that against what the Conservatives have been pulling in the House, particularly their little stunt last Friday.

If the member is looking for examples of bad news, I suggest he should talk about the Conservatives' treatment of Atlantic Canada. He might also talk about his support for the Conservative climate change plan which exempts the tar sands in his own riding from meeting the air emission standards that are so desperately needed in that part of the country. That to me is a real example of how a member is not supporting his constituency. The hon. member's statement yesterday was like much of what we hear from the government, not the complete story.

I am opposed to this budget as a whole, both as a Canadian and a northerner. My opposition is based on the fact that average Canadians do not get much help in the budget. My opposition is based on the fact that aboriginal people do not get much help in the budget. My opposition is based on the fact that it is an incomplete deal for northerners in the budget. My opposition is based on the fact that only large corporations really get help in the budget.

By taxing average Canadians to death while allowing their corporate friends to pay less and less tax, the Conservatives, like the Liberals before them, have ended up sucking an extra \$14 billion from the pockets of Canadians. They have dedicated \$9 billion of that to

debt repayment even though Canada has the lowest national debt of any of the G-7 countries.

Our economy continues to produce good numbers resulting in huge government revenues largely by increasing the tax burden on ordinary Canadians. Working Canadians have paid over the last decade to put the government's fiscal house in order. That job is done and the benefits should flow back to average Canadians.

The numbers are staggering. We have the opportunity now not to increase the prosperity gap as has been going on for the last 15 years, but to bring it back to the way it was in the past where the middle class, the average Canadian, had a much better chance of success in this country.

The Conservatives say that the budget returns benefits across the country. They point to the revamped funding formula provided to the three territories this year, the so-called fiscal rebalancing. To be honest, the new formula funding arrangement is better than the formula imposed by the Liberals. I am glad to see the base amount has been increased so we are no longer using 1985 numbers. I am glad to see a more fair system for calculation of the formulas being used, unlike the perverse system imposed by past governments, but I am concerned that the new formula still uses population in its calculation. Multiplying the average southern cost of a program or service by the territories' population does not reflect the real cost for the provision of that service in the north.

The government as well has agreed to raise the NWT borrowing limit from \$300 million to \$500 million, a move that was long overdue and was really essential in providing just the basic tools for our territorial government to operate. Our present borrowing limit is strained with utility and mortgage debt. In reality the capitalization costs in western Canada have almost doubled in the last five years. This amount still remains inadequate for what the north has ahead of it with the scale of development potential.

Yesterday the member for Fort McMurray—Athabasca went on and on about how I was delaying a one time payment of \$54 million to our territorial government. This amount is simply an accounting correction, what in business is referred to as a credit note. The amount that the new formula increased the actual transfer of funds is listed in the budget, \$10 million over what would have happened. We can see that the amounts are not that generous or that significant.

(1225)

To northerners, there are many things missing in the budget. For starters, where is relief for northerners from the high cost of living? For some time we have been calling for an increase in the northern residents tax deduction. When I asked over a month ago whether the government would bring some tax fairness to the people of the north, this was the response by the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development:

At this point we are focused on economic development in the north. That is the key to create jobs and employment opportunities. There is the Mackenzie Valley pipeline in particular and the \$500 million socio-economic fund.

Creating jobs that cannot be filled by northerners does not help the working families of the north one little bit. It does nothing to build the north. From his response it is clear that the minister is more interested in helping the oil companies of Calgary and the Petroleum Club than the working families in Old Crow or Tuktoyaktuk or Pond Inlet.

In the budget speech, the finance minister stated that the capital gains exemption was in need of an immediate increase because it had not been changed in 20 years. The same thing applies to the northern residents tax deduction. It has not been changed in 20 years. It is not keeping up with inflation. It is not fair to northerners, but of course it was only average northerners who wanted this change and not necessarily the business elite.

The northern residents tax deduction did change a bit. The change is a cynical pork-barrelling addition of the southern part of the government whip's riding. The government members knew what was going on but chose to do one small shameful thing.

The NWT got no action on resource revenue sharing. The resources of the NWT rival those of nations such as South Africa or the United Arab Emirates, but not one cent of those royalties has helped the people of the north directly.

For more than a generation Canada has been saying that it is willing to hand over control and ownership of these riches. However, the government is just like those of the past and it continues to delay. The current excuse is that we need to restart negotiations. Every day Canada delays fulfilment of this promise is another day that millions of dollars, whether from the diamond fields or the oil and gas fields, are lost to the people of the north.

I hear the minister offering up royalties to the oil companies for the pipeline. To promote this pipeline, he is offering up the royalties that the people of the NWT have a share in. I would say to the minister that he should offer up something that is his to offer. He could offer something in the way of subsidies to a multinational oil company, and that is his to offer, but not the royalties that northerners will need to develop their territory and their region of this country, just as every other region has used its own royalties in the same fashion. The people of the Northwest Territories do not mind hearing “mañana” when on vacation in Mexico, but they are tired of hearing it from Ottawa when it comes to ownership of resources.

Another budget item that is quite worrisome to northerners is on page 186. On that page the Conservative government lays out its plan for negating its commitments under the land claim agreements and for silencing the voice of northerners when it comes to environmental assessments.

According to the budget, a law written to implement the portion of land claim agreements whereby aboriginal people are granted a say in how their land is used must be changed, because the pro-industry minister feels it is too restrictive to large corporations. It is clear that the minister's purpose is to gut the very little protection that aboriginal people and other northerners have under the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act and make it open season for rampant development. It is clear from this statement in the budget that the Conservatives will not let anything get in the way of exploitation, even if it means going back on the word of the Crown.

The Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board has recently turned down an application by Ur-Energy to prospect for uranium in the Thelon Basin, an area of the north for which there is unanimity among northerners about the need for its protection. This decision has been roundly attacked by the mining industry, which is spreading the falsehood that the board overstepped its bounds.

However, subsection 64(1) of the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act, which created the board, is an act of this Parliament and the responsibility of this Parliament, and it states:

A board shall seek and consider the advice of any affected first nation...respecting the presence of heritage resources that might be affected by a use of land or waters or a deposit of waste proposed in an application for a license or permit.

(1230)

The board did what it was constituted to do. The minister should do his job and support the interests of the people whose land is under threat. He should forget about the arrogant statement in the budget on the government streamlining the regulations, going against the word of the Crown and not playing fair with the constitutional rights of aboriginal people across the north.

This is all in the budget. How can I as a northerner support these kinds of things in any document that comes before this House?

I have to admit that I am not hopeful this government will keep its word to the working people of the north, because it did not keep its word of the Crown on the Atlantic accord. This is a budget that is not for everyone, and it is not for me.

....

**Mr. Dennis Bevington:**

Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that I have heard the hon. member's question before in this House at a different time. The people of the north understand this royalty game that is going on here in Canada. I am sure that I have great support when I stand here and say

that we do not want to continue to be ripped off for our royalties. This budget does not identify how that is not going to happen.

When we talk about the equalization formula and the arrangements between provinces and territories, sometimes we in the north feel like second-class citizens, like the government is giving us something. The government is saying to us that it is giving this to us and we should be grateful.

We want our own way in the Northwest Territories, just as it is in the other provinces. We do not want to have government officials and politicians telling us that we should be grateful for something that every Canadian receives. I have no doubt in my mind that the people in the north will support me in what I am trying to say for them in this House.

....

**Mr. Dennis Bevington:**

Mr. Speaker, that question really does speak to something in my speech, which is that I talked about the formula and the recognition that population is not the way to determine costs. We have incredible costs for health care in the Northwest Territories. They are exacerbated, of course, by distance, transportation costs and our inability to maintain professionals in the north. These things are all real problems for us.

The wait times we are faced with are sometimes about getting diagnoses. In many cases, people are sitting in little communities and waiting months simply to see a nurse or a nurse practitioner so they can get the first analysis of what is going on with their health. That is the real situation of health care in many places in the north.

Yes, if we take a per capita allocation of resources for these important things in terms of health care, our wait times will not decrease. Our wait times will become not better but worse, and the ability of the northern health care system to provide decent service across the north to all the very remote communities will remain one of our biggest concerns.

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## 39th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION

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CONTENTS

**Wednesday, June 13, 2007**

**Natural Resources**

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**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):**

Mr. Speaker, the June 7 speech to the natural gas conference in Ottawa by the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development is creating confusion in the Northwest Territories. In his speech the minister said, "It may be necessary to reconfigure and reinvent the project". The confusion the minister is creating through this piecemeal approach is just one more reason that Canada must have a strategy on energy security.

Will the Conservative minister clearly state once and for all what his government's real position is on the Mackenzie Valley pipeline and end this confusion?

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**Hon. Jim Prentice (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, CPC):**

Mr. Speaker, the hon. member and his party have frequently commented about big oil and big gas. I actually recall one memorable exchange where the term “big ass” was in fact used.

The hon. member himself has repeatedly expressed his opposition to the Mackenzie Valley pipeline. To the amazement of everyone this past weekend, he called on the government to subsidize the Mackenzie Valley pipeline.

Perhaps the NDP members could explain why they are opposed to a private sector pipeline, but in favour of the same pipeline if it is publicly subsidized.

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**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):**

Mr. Speaker, obviously the minister does not know the difference between a subsidy and ownership, and he should learn it.

In the same speech the minister said that the Conservative government would want to do the same thing the Liberals wanted to do, give away the royalties that really belonged to the average people of the Northwest Territories.

The northern royalty rates are already so low they constitute a giveaway of the oil and gas.

Will the minister please explain how following the discredited Liberal plan to give away the royalties will benefit the working people of the north?

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**Hon. Jim Prentice (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, CPC):**

Mr. Speaker, the government will follow a Conservative plan. I have made it very clear that this project is a piece of basin opening, private infrastructure. It is an important project to the country, but it is one that must be constructed by the private sector. It must make sense to the shareholders of the companies that construct it. That is the way this project must proceed.

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## **39th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION**

**EDITED HANSARD • NUMBER 174**

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**Tuesday, June 19, 2007**

### **Phthalate Control Act**

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C-307, An Act to prohibit the use of benzyl butyl phthalate (BBP), dibutyl phthalate (DBP) and di(2-ethylhexyl)phthalate (DEHP) in certain products and to amend the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999, as reported (with amendment) from the committee.

....

**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):**

Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to speak to Bill C-307, the phthalate control act, introduced by the member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley, who takes the environment very seriously.

I have followed the progress of my colleague's work on this bill, in the drafting process and in getting ideas together. This bill should be supported by all parliamentarians and all Canadians because it will reduce the risk of cancer and other diseases in a vulnerable part of our population. There is no appreciable downside to the bill. It is all good. It meets all the tests for developing environmental legislation in this country. As such, I hope that the bill can receive reasonably speedy passage.

As soon as things like this bill are put in place, the cumulative impact of the products on people's lives will be taken away. As soon as we start to reduce that cumulative effect there will be a reduction in the serious and debilitating illnesses and diseases that are a real plague in modern society.

Some of the statistics that come out about the rate of cancer in our society are truly frightening. We need to confront things as soon as possible. We need to take action. We need to take away the risks of living as much as possible. Preventing disease is much more practical and reasonable than trying to deal with it once it has happened.

When we understand that a substance can be harmful to humans, then surely we should follow the precautionary principle and take it out of manufactured products. There are substitutions. There are other products that are just as good. These are the things that drive the bill forward.

I congratulate my hon. colleague for putting forward this bill. It is not something that will catch the headlines, but it will help Canadians in the future. It is something we can all support to make a difference in the lives of Canadians.

If the principles that my colleague has put forward in this private member's bill are carried forward with many other substances, we would be much better off. We all make compromises in what we do in this society. If we understand that products that we are using are harmful to people's health sometimes we make compromises and allow it to continue which is a real detriment to our society.

Before I was elected to Parliament, there was a Conservative member who put forward a private member's bill regarding taking the compound out of cigarettes that allowed them to stay lit when they were not being smoked. I was impressed that a private member's bill could make such a dramatic change to people's health in terms of things that some people were ingesting through their use of tobacco. Cigarettes play a major role in people's lives. We know of people who have died in bed because of smouldering cigarettes.

(1825)

That private member's bill from the last Parliament will have a major impact on people's health. I see Bill C-307 in the same light. It is something we should all be behind. It is something that means something to Canadians in a very positive and progressive fashion. The bill can set a pattern for how we deal with similar substances in the future.

We all care about children who are at risk. Canadians care about children, how they are treated, how they grow up and how they are socialized. We should be involved with doing what we can to prevent contact with substances that can lead to cancer and debilitating disease.

I trust that Parliament will push this bill forward and that we will see it in place as soon as possible. It will make a difference for Canadians forever more.

I thank my hon. colleague from Skeena—Bulkley Valley who has worked so hard to bring this bill forward and to put it in a form that everyone can support.

....

## **Criminal Code**

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-21, An Act to amend the Criminal Code and the Firearms Act (non-registration of firearms that are neither prohibited nor restricted), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

....

**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):**

Mr. Speaker, I am certainly glad to get a chance to ask a question, but I think I will have a chance to speak later on, so I do not want to take away all my thunder.

It was an interesting comment that the hon. member made about the 16,000 licences that were not issued. Is the hon. member confused between certificates for the possession of specific firearms and the licences that will remain as part of the system? Which one of those was he referring to when he said "16,000 licences"? The ability for police to turn down licences will remain after the bill passes.

....

**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):**

Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Trinity—Spadina.

I am very pleased to have an opportunity to speak to Bill C-21. I would like to thank the government for finally bringing the bill forward, for finally finding the courage of its conviction at this very late date. If we approached all the bills with the same degree of courage the government has shown with this one, we would be way behind in our legislative agenda.

Coming from the Northwest Territories and being our party's critic for rural and remote communities, I have run in three elections supporting the concept of taking away the registry on long guns and shotguns. Throughout those three elections people across the north consistently said to me that it is not required, it is not necessary and it is not really working for them.

I want to take a step back from that and look at what is working in gun control in Canada now. What is clearly working right now is the registry that is in place for licensing. Quite clearly, we have a better system of licensing now. I guess we can thank the Liberal Party for delivering that in the legislation in 1995. We have a better computerized system. It delivers for licensing. We are more organized and efficient at processing licences. I have heard the number of rejected licences, some 16,000, for people who were not considered appropriate to have firearms. That is a good and meaningful figure. It is a figure that makes Canadians safer on the ground. We can thank the Liberal Party for that.

However, when it comes to suggesting that one party or the other in Parliament has the vision to put everything together, that has the ability to transcend the ideology and politics of the day, whether it is in 1995 or 2007, and come up with a plan that is going to match what is required for Canada, that is a very egotistical approach.

We suffered under that with the majority Liberal government. It did not understand the nature of gun control. The Liberals had a law that tried to do too much. The things that it did not do well are the certificates for individual firearms, for long rifles and shotguns. Those are the things that were not done well. Those are the things that this bill will take out of the system. This is not the end of gun control in Canada. It is an adjustment to the gun control legislation that we have in the country. Quite clearly, that is what we are doing here and that is why we should all look at it in that fashion.

This is not about one party being against the other. This is about looking at what is good for Canadians. As a New Democrat in an open party, I feel very good about standing here today and supporting the adjustment that is being proposed by the government. Why? Because in my territory, before the gun registry, the value of subsistence hunting was some \$60 million for 45,000 inhabitants. That same message is repeated right across northern Canada and northern parts of the provinces. For people who use rifles and shotguns for their way of life, the gun registry did not work.

It was said at the time in 1995 in Parliament that it would not work. It was not adjusted to make it work. The importance of that to many people across the country was not recognized. We had a situation where a majority government, not a minority government



as we have today, made a decision in its magnificence to create a gun control law that went too far.

(2110)

We are taking it back now perhaps with this bill. This is a minority government and we may find that this bill will not meet the test of all members in this House. It meets the test of this member standing here right now. I support it because I see it as a necessary adjustment to gun control.

The bill does not pass up the good work that is in gun control now. If the government decides to put more effort into licensing by ensuring that the people who own firearms are capable, competent and not criminal in nature, then the gun registry is an excellent investment of public funds. It is an investment that will be returned to everybody in the country.

Storage is extremely important. Safety is extremely important. Training is extremely important. These characteristics that we have built into gun control now should be enhanced and regulated to a greater degree. Quite often if guns are not stored properly, they become available to people who may use them wrongly. I have seen too many tragedies involving young people or people who are not in their right mind who are impaired in one way or another, taking somebody else's rifles or guns that are not stored properly and either doing themselves in or doing in others. We can control that through legislation. We can make a difference to all legal gun owners and the safety of this country.

There is a huge requirement for the control of handguns in our cities. There is a huge requirement for the control of restricted weapons that are easily concealed and are the basis of the criminal industry in this country. A ban on handguns in the future may be part of the legislative agenda of this House, perhaps not with the present government, but perhaps with the next. There would be an onward evolution of gun control in this country. I hope when we debate it that we make sensible choices about how to put that in place.

There is one other aspect of the use of guns in this country that I want to speak to and that is what guns are being used for. Guns are being used to feed the appetite of Canadians for drugs and illicit goods. The majority of illegal guns are causing death and havoc in our cities.

We say that we have to stop criminals by catching them and putting them in jail. We need to recognize the necessity of adjusting our legislation to truly change the criminal state. We need to take some of the oxygen out of the criminal system, what makes it worthwhile for someone to have a handgun in his or her possession, the tens of billions of dollars of illicit drugs that are being sold in this country.

How do we stop the appetite of Canadians for illegal drugs and illicit goods? Are we doing a successful job at that through enforcement, through all the tricks of the trade that we have developed in our war on drugs? I do not think so. I think it has been an abject failure. If this legislature does not come to grips with that, we will never truly understand how to deal with crime in this country.

On the one hand I support this legislation. It is a great adjustment to the gun control legislation in Canada. On the other hand, we have so much work to do to reduce crime in this country.

....

**Mr. Dennis Bevington:**

Mr. Speaker, certainly, the basis of my support in three elections was the failure of the previous Liberal government to understand the impact of the gun registry on hunters, trappers, subsistence users of wildlife across the country, whether they be aboriginal or non-aboriginal.

We could say why not just register them. It does not work like that. When people are part of that subsistence economy, they may borrow guns and use guns. It is a tradition and a lifestyle that has been upset and changed without careful attention to what it meant. I think that is the key and that is where the strong reaction comes from.

In the words of Charlie Snowshoe, an elder from Fort MacPherson who has run the game council there for many years, he is totally opposed to this. He said that it has taken the young people out of hunting. It is taking the tradition out of hunting and trapping. It is changing it and turning people away from a pastime which has been so valuable to them.

....

**Mr. Dennis Bevington:**

Mr. Speaker, the member is quite right. Everybody wants to stop accidents with guns, the kinds of things that happen without trained people, without safety as a paramount issue in the use of firearms.

I think that fits with the hunting and trapping tradition as well, where individuals go out in the bush by themselves with a gun and they have to survive. If by chance the gun does not work or the people run out of ammunition and they have to borrow some from someone else, that should not be a crime. There is that tradition. Interestingly enough, we have focused on gun control, but we--

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## **39th PARLIAMENT, 2nd SESSION**

**EDITED HANSARD • NUMBER 005**

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**Monday, October 22, 2007**

### **Resumption of debate on Address in Reply**

The House resumed from October 19 consideration of the motion for an address to Her Excellency the Governor General in reply to her speech at the opening of the session, and of the amendment.

....

**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):**

Mr. Speaker, I compliment my colleague on her excellent speech.

In terms of failure to live up to the expectations that were created in the last Parliament, I stood here with the member when the Prime Minister agreed to send the clean air act to committee so that we as a group could consider the important issue of climate change and put it in perspective.

In the throne speech he has come back and said that only the positions that the Conservative Party agreed to in the committee are going to be the ones that the government supports. What kind of action toward this institution did the Prime Minister make with that declaration? I ask the hon. member, has the Prime Minister completely lost the point of government and representation that is so fundamental to our system?

....

## Christopher Worden

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**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):**

Mr. Speaker, over the Thanksgiving weekend the people of the community of Hay River awoke to a terrible event when a respected RCMP officer was shot and died in the line of duty.

Constable Christopher Worden had built a fine reputation in his time in the north. He was raising a family in the north and participated fully in his northern home. Such a senseless act will remain with northerners for a very long time.

Constable Worden represents so many other Canadian men and women who have taken up policing with the RCMP in the north. We are grateful for the professional, caring and sensitive work that the members provide in our far-flung communities. Like Constable Worden, their efforts go beyond police work and that makes them an integral part of the life of the people they serve.

There is little anonymity in our northern life. We know our police officers and respect them. The tragedy of the shooting of Constable Worden has touched us all. We mourn together with his family and friends in the community of Hay River. A memorial for Constable Worden will be held in Hay River this Saturday.

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## 39th PARLIAMENT, 2nd SESSION

EDITED HANSARD • NUMBER 008

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**Thursday, October 25, 2007**

Opposition Motion—The Economy

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

....

**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):**

Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to rise and ask questions of my hon. colleague from Richmond Hill.

I am certainly interested in what he has to say about infrastructure. We all know that infrastructure guides the progress of our industry and our lives. Certainly we need money to invest in infrastructure.

The motion today in talking about the reduction of corporate taxes follows a trend that was set over 13 years that brought Canada's corporate tax rate down to the other corporate tax rates in North America and around the world. In reality the corporate world in Canada has not been hurt. When the NDP forced the Liberals in 2004 not to reduce the corporate tax rate further, that did not upset industry. That did not upset business in this country. Things kept on going.

When we look at infrastructure and we look at the dollars we need to invest in our cities, towns and villages and we think of those that are going to gain from that

investment, why would we want to cut back corporate taxes, cut back the available resources that the federal government can put into the important infrastructure work? Why is--

....

**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):**

Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the hon. member. Since 2001, corporate tax cuts have been introduced by the Liberals and the Conservatives followed with theirs. I cannot really tell the difference between the parties when it comes to tax policy. Yes, Liberals and Conservatives can argue over GST cuts. They can argue over the details, but they are dedicated to cutting corporate taxes. They have done it for many years. Right now we are running at close to \$10.5 billion in corporate tax cuts that are going to accrue this year over 2001.

The return investment by those corporations into our economy has risen by only 1% of the gross national product. Where are we seeing the great return to the Canadian economy from this type of corporate tax cut?

....

**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):**

Mr. Speaker, I am glad we have this opportunity today to see the opposition motion come forward. It has shown to Canadians the great heated agreement that we have between the Liberals and the Conservatives over economic policy.

When we look at the issues that divide them, it is more about who in the corporate sector will get the money or who will get the breaks, rather than looking at the situation for workers and ordinary Canadians who have suffered over the last 15 years and saw the prosperity gap between them and corporations increase.

How does the member differentiate himself as a Conservative in economic policy from those of the Liberals? How do you do that? Do you work very carefully in fine detail to come up with that answer?

....

**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):**

Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Trinity—Spadina.

It was amusing today to read the motion by the Liberals when last night the Liberals gave the Conservatives what they cannot get from the electorate, and that is a majority in the House. How can they criticize when they cannot perform their own functions in Parliament?

In some ways, though, the Liberals and the Conservatives come very close together. Really, we cannot expect much difference from them on economic policy.

The motion today, which talks about a number of things, may differentiate slightly on the details of how the Liberals would turn more money over to corporations, whether it is through income trusts or through more significant tax breaks for corporations, but they are after the same thing. They are together in this.

We do not see any trouble with their members moving from one side to the other, especially in the front benches where they really do have a great deal in common. They represent the interests of large corporations. They do not, in any way, represent the common people of this country, who, over the last 15 years, have been working more hours, getting paid less and are going into debt deeper and deeper. That is the situation for workers, ordinary people of this country. Both those parties follow the same line.

The working families of Canada expect their MPs to do their jobs. Northerners expect that I will do my job, which means standing up to the wrong-headed approach that the government is taking. I am sure the voters in Nunavut and Yukon expect the same. I am sure the voters in the Yukon did not expect their MP to be a pamphlet writer here in the last few days for the Conservative Party.

In some respects, what we have to show Canadians today is a clear message. On many of the most important aspects of our work in Parliament, determining the breakdown of how the economy will work, the level of resources that we are demanding from different sectors, from people and from businesses, we are seeing that those two groups are very close together.

If the Liberals had done their work, they would know that between 1993 and 1997 they were the ones who cut billions of dollars from post-secondary education. When they finally put money back in, it did not make up the difference that had been created from the original cutbacks.

To add insult to injury, the Liberals in 2004 combined post-secondary education with all other federal-provincial transfers making it impossible to determine how much was really being provided by the federal government for post-secondary education. That was kind of a neat accounting trick but it does not give good government.

If the Liberals had done their work on this motion today, they would have known that the last Liberal budget of 2005 contained zero new dollars for physical infrastructure for our communities. If they had done their job, they would have known that under the last Liberal government federal spending on transportation infrastructure fell by 46%. That is not the road to long term productivity.

If the Liberals had done their work before presenting this motion today, they would have known that their plan for research and development, which is to give greater tax breaks to businesses, does not work. Without connecting the tax breaks to actual research and development investment, there is no way of ensuring that the additional funds flowing from the lower tax rates actually go to research and development.

The Liberals' plan on research and development was an excuse to increase the prosperity gap between working Canadians and their big business friends.

The Alberta Federation of Labour stated:

The most efficient and simplest cure to the nation's lagging R&D would be to increase funding directly to the federal government's own under-appreciated research efforts and to commit significant new funds to the academic researchers at our universities.

(1700)

That did not happen. It did not happen under the Liberals and it is not happening under the Conservatives.

Regular Canadians want leadership from their MPs, those in this House, and that is what we want to provide as well.

I have been providing leadership to our people in the north of this country by working to increase the northern residence tax deductions. In 20 years there has been no increase. This northern residence tax deduction could help productivity. Right now, throughout northern Canada, we have a tremendous productive zone making wealth for Canadians and fuelling the economy of southern Canada but the workers cannot afford to live there. The workers are not getting the kind of break that 20 years ago a previous Conservative government thought was a good idea for northerners. We have not seen any change in that amount over those 20 years.

However, what we have seen are significant increases in tax breaks for corporations and businesses.

In the last budget, the Conservatives said that we needed tax fairness, that the capital gains exemption for businesses had not been increased for 20 years. It was at \$500,000 and they put it up to \$750,000. They should look at all aspects of fairness in the system and, when they do, they will see that the northern residence tax deduction has suffered the same fate under the Liberals over those many years.

One aspect of the economy that was not mentioned in the throne speech and is not in the Liberals' motion is energy, the development and use of energy, and yet this issue is the largest single issue facing Canada and the world right now. We need a strategic approach to energy. It is being called for by provincial premiers, business leaders and academic research groups. Everyone is saying that we need to get together to create a strategic approach to energy in this country. Every other energy exporting country in the

world has an approach that puts its country first. We need an approach to energy that puts Canada first.

In the *Globe and Mail*, Patrick Daniel, chief executive officer of the petroleum pipeline and distribution firm Enbridge Inc., said:

I firmly believe that developing and implementing a national energy strategy would help resolve many of the issues facing the oil and gas industries.

Mr. Daniel went on to say:

A national strategy would help in mapping our energy development agenda and serve to prioritize our initiatives, including R&D and training.

Why have these two governments not done this? Because both of them, the Liberal and the Conservative governments, have been too busy down in the United States selling out our energy future.

When will they put Canada first in energy and ensure that our children have a future that has reasonably priced energy for their homes and clean energy as well?

Direct Energy CEO, Deryk King, said in the same article:

We have a need for a national energy policy with federal-provincial co-operation.

On August 9, Canada's 13 premiers released a shared vision on energy that highlights the importance of energy conservation, supply and demand and infrastructure to Canada's prosperity, yet both these parties in their approach so far have said nothing about this incredibly important topic.

....

**Mr. Dennis Bevington:**

It is shameful.

Last year the Prime Minister talked about Canada becoming an energy super power. That is highly unlikely. We are heading in the other direction.

We need an energy security strategy. It would go a long way to build this economy, to build prosperity and to ensure we have a continued productivity increase.

We can show leadership on this side. We can address the questions that Canadians have.

....

**Mr. Dennis Bevington:**

Mr. Speaker, in the last Conservative budget, it talked about fairness in taxation. I believe in fairness in taxation. I worked in the municipal system where we looked at fairness between various forms of tax bodies, which is what we need. We need to understand what we are delivering with the tax system. Yes, the GST is onerous and, yes, it applies to all of us, but at the same time we need the resources put back into Canadians.

With the failure to consider other forms of taxation, be it energy consumption taxation or corporate taxation, where do we go? We should go toward fairness. We should look at what we want to accomplish with the tax system and apply it accordingly in a fair and equitable fashion. That is how taxes should be dealt with in this country.

When the Conservatives say on the one hand that they can do this in the budget and it will be fair, why do they not apply it throughout the system? When I see actual effort on the part of any party to address fairness in taxation, I would certainly support that.

....

**Mr. Dennis Bevington:**

Mr. Speaker, I must admit that it could only be a Liberal who would read the Conservative handbook that the right wing author has created. I would prefer to read something from Naomi Klein or somebody who actually has an analysis of the system that I could understand.

Canadian voters may make decisions. I have run in many elections. I have won some and I have lost some but I do not go around crying about it afterward. I accept what the voters say and I move on.

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## 39th PARLIAMENT, 2nd SESSION

EDITED HANSARD • NUMBER 011

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**Tuesday, October 30, 2007**

### **Nuclear Liability and Compensation Act**

....

**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):**

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak to the nuclear liability bill that is in front of us. It quite clearly has been brought forward in order to facilitate the development of the nuclear industry in Canada. In the original development in regard to nuclear liability, going back to the 1970s, we established that limit because private insurers of course would not deal with nuclear accidents. We set a liability limit of \$75 million then.

Let us think of that number. We can refer to the American Brookhaven report of 1957, which suggested that liability for nuclear accidents could be in the \$7 billion range in 1957 dollars. We can see that this limit was set very significantly to develop the industry. The industry has had a long tenure of development and has moved on. Now we are moving into designing legislation that will increase the amount of liability held by companies that develop or own nuclear plants.

Contrary to what the minister told us earlier, under this new act the liability for an operator for damage resulting from a nuclear incident is limited to \$650 million. While small nuclear incidents such as the loss of a fuel bundle and the resulting contamination of an area of 400 metres, let us say, might be covered under this amount, certainly the larger scale nuclear accidents that we have seen in the world would not be covered.

We have a new bill in front of us in Parliament that is trying to catch up to something done in the early 1970s. Is it adequate? Has this bill been presented in an adequate enough fashion? Is the government willing to negotiate in an adequate enough fashion to make this bill acceptable? I have yet to hear that in the debate today. As such, NDP members will be considering what we hear as the debate moves along to the point of deciding to support or not support the bill.

I come from the Northwest Territories, an area of Canada that has had plenty of experience with nuclear contamination.

Let us think back to the 1930s and a community called Deline, which for many years was known as the village of widows because the men in the village serviced the development of Port Radium. They hauled the yellowcake on their shoulders in burlap bags which were put on barges and sent down the river to service the emerging nuclear weapons industry in the United States. There was no compensation for this. There was no consideration of this at the time.

There is a longstanding contamination issue. This year, finally, in Port Radium there is an ongoing cleanup effort at the mine site, some 70 years later. The mine site cleanup is not extensive, but it is costing in the tens of millions of dollars.

The nuclear trail from this contamination extends all the way down the river system. AECL came to my community in 1985 to examine the presence of nuclear material along the river system. My community was a portage point for all of the material that came out of the Port Radium site. At that time one could still find on the ground burlap sacks that had been dropped from trucks. The presence of the material after 70 years was still such that it could be detected quite easily and isolated.

(1130)

That radioactive material was in the community for that many years, which suggests to me that when we talk about 30 years of liability for nuclear material in our environment, in our communities, we are talking about a number that perhaps does not match up with reality.

We also could talk about the Ray Rock Mines where there is still 71,000 tonnes of uranium mine waste. Ten families had to abandon their homes due to contamination from the mine. Radionuclides and heavy metals from the tailings have found their way into fish and mammals in the area. There has been no compensation. This is still part of the nuclear industry that we have in Canada.

We can see that in the Northwest Territories we do not have a great record when it comes to dealing with nuclear waste.

There is another incident of contamination that I would like to mention. It is about contamination that comes from an external source, one that is not covered in the bill. Canada has no liability coverage for external acts whereby contamination from nuclear waste comes from another country, but we live next to a very large country that uses a lot of nuclear energy.

However, I am talking about Cosmos 954, which in 1978 burned up in the atmosphere over the Northwest Territories. The nuclear reactor onboard a satellite is pretty small. It would probably fit in an average thermos bottle. My community was some 300 miles away from where that small nuclear reactor burned up in the atmosphere. The next year, I had officials from AECL in my driveway picking up identifiable pieces from Cosmos 954 and that nuclear accident. Those small bits of nuclear fissionable material spread over 124,000 square kilometres.

Therefore, when we talk about liability in the nuclear industry and the nature of what we are dealing with here, we are talking about a very serious issue.

I would like to refer to another matter that speaks to this as well. That is the Giant Mine, where in order to deal with an industry that has closed down, we now are dealing with 270,000 tonnes of arsenic. It is going to be left in the mine shafts. It is going to be frozen in there. This method of dealing with contaminated material is not to move it. It is simply to freeze it in the ground, right in the middle of the largest community in my riding.

Our record of dealing with contamination in this country, of dealing with the impact of industrial development that leaves behind material harmful to human existence, is not that great. It is not that perfect. Our record is nothing that we can stand up and be proud of in this country.

Therefore, when we speak about protecting working families in Canada with legislation, we have to be pretty careful about what we are going to do. We have to examine what we are doing here in great detail. We cannot just simply slap something through to make up for the 30 years of inaction by the government on this subject.

In 1957 the liability limit for a nuclear plant in the United States was \$560 million. What is it today for our neighbour, the one we share so much with, the one the Conservative Party loves to harmonize with, the one the Liberal Party has worked so hard to harmonize with over so many years? It is now \$9.7 billion. So what is going on here when we are setting our limit at \$650 million? The public will have to pay for any amounts over the limited liability. Contrary to what the minister says, that is what is going to happen.



This liability level has to be increased. It has to be increased to a level commensurate with that of our largest trading partner, and not simply with signed treaties or conventions, but with the actual practical use of nuclear energy on this continent.

(1135)

Limited liability was needed when the industry was getting started. The question is whether it should be in place today. Do we put limited liability on a wind farm? Do we put limited liability on solar panels? We do not. Do other countries have limited liability? Germany does not. Germany, of course, lives downwind from Chernobyl and it has unlimited liability on its nuclear industry. Did its nuclear industry quit with that? No. Did the nuclear industry in the United States close up because it had a \$9.7 billion limited liability? No, it did not.

What is different about Canada? How is Canada different from the United States? Why would our industry flee if we put a proper liability in place for it? It is a question that we can all ponder as we debate this subject.

The liability within the bill is too narrow. There are many more accidents of small amounts of nuclear material than there is from large plants and yet that is not covered in this legislation. Many times we have seen contamination coming forth from medical equipment, equipment that is used in the oil and gas industry and from various sources of radiation that are used in industry in our daily lives. Those are also things that should be legislated. They should be under some measure of control to ensure that the operators that use them dispose of them correctly and protect Canadians. Without legislation, people need to sue to get compensation from these types of actions, and that is not fair.

The definition of damage in the bill is also troublesome. Damage can be in the environment, as well as in one's building and in one's personal self. It can be long-lasting in the environment. I talked about it earlier in my speech. These are things that remain behind with the nuclear industry. The bill needs to have a proper definition of damage.

A damage definition could be expanded to include damage due to a loss of business or due to a fear of contamination like Japan. This could be part of the bill. We will be talking about this more as the days go on.

As I mentioned earlier, there is no particular protection for incidents that can happen from external sources of contamination from the nuclear industry, nuclear satellites, nuclear ships and all manner of the use of nuclear energy.

Germany provides this type of compensation and it has good reason to do so. It understands the issue.

If I may, I will bring this around to economics. What is it about setting a limit that is so much below the limit of our largest trading partner? What will that do to the industry? Does it subsidize the Canadian reactors over the U.S. reactors? Perhaps it does if they are built by American companies for export of electrical energy to the United States.

We could find ourselves in a situation where we are paying for the development of nuclear reactors for another country with our limited liability here, with our lesser standards for the use and development of this industry. Therefore, we need to be very careful about what we are doing in relationship to our major trading partner, the partner with which we engage in so many other harmonization activities.

The whole issue of the use of nuclear energy and moving forward with it should be part of a larger energy strategy. We cannot determine the future direction of the Canadian energy matrix without having everyone on a level playing field. If a level playing field means that the nuclear industry must carry the liability for its product, for its industry, for its demobilization and for its safe storage of hazardous waste, that should be it, that should be part of its equation. Just as part of the equation for the use of solar energy is the need to reduce the cost of manufacturing panels and just as the cost of wind power is the intermittency of its production, these are things that need to be put in context with each other.

(1140)

We are dealing with the nuclear industry today. Let us deal with it and put it in a context that makes it fairer for Canadians for the future. When we make decisions about the direction we should take in Canada with energy, they should be made with the assurance that all is understood, that all is put into the equation and that it all makes sense. This is not the case right now. The bill does not go far enough to allow that to happen.

I want to hear what other parties have to say about this because it is a tremendously important issue. We want to understand whether this is worthwhile to go to committee and whether we can get an acceptable result in committee for all the problems that we have identified in the bill today.

I have enjoyed the opportunity to speak to the bill because in many ways we need a frank discussion on the nuclear industry in Canada. We need to understand what it means to develop in this direction, what it costs and what we are leaving behind for our children and grandchildren.

....

**Mr. Dennis Bevington:**

Mr. Speaker, if we consider it, a major nuclear catastrophe probably would not be covered by any sort of limited liability, whether it is \$10 billion or \$650 million.

There may be a requirement to create a nuclear liability regime of two tiers. The first tier would be liability insurance, which we are proposing here, but the second tier could be an unlimited amount paid initially out of the public purse with all the nuclear operators that are engaged in the same industry being required to pay back on a divided pro-rated basis. Therefore, we could have some protection within the industry as well, which might be one of the ways that we could expand the liability.

We are interested in the thoughts of members on this issue. These are potential changes that could be made to the legislation with the support of all parties.

As we have seen in the past, when we have gone forward with amendments that go beyond what the minority government wants, it simply does not bring the bill forward. We are concerned about that because it is not a useful situation in the work we do in Parliament.

We would like to see some frank discussions about the bill before we make our choice about how we vote on it.

....

**Mr. Dennis Bevington:**

Mr. Speaker, I go back to the American limit of \$9.7 billion. The Americans had experience with Three Mile Island and they have had extensive experience with nuclear reactors. That is the limit they have set on their industry.

In looking at our industry, we have \$75 million right now, so we obviously need to change. Where do we change to? If what the member is saying, that the likelihood of an occurrence of a large event with Canadian safety records and with the good work that Canadian engineers do we will not have a big event, I would suggest that might mitigate the charges that would go to accompany under any liability but does not necessarily mean that we need to limit the amount. The liability carried could be carried at a higher level regardless of what the anticipated occurrence cost is going to be. The occurrence cost is one thing and the liability is another.

When we look at the industry in North America and put it into context with what the United States is doing, where are we?

....

**Mr. Dennis Bevington:**

Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned in my speech in response to the question from my colleague, our experience in the Northwest Territories with industrial development, the

responsibility for the clean up of contaminated sites, and the ongoing problems in human health has been almost non-existent.

What we have seen, what the past has given us, is not really all that favourable toward the industry. On the other hand, we all know that there are countless junior companies looking to explore for uranium in our region. We do recognize as well that the nuclear industry is an industry that is a well established industry in Canada.

To speak to what my constituents want is a difficult issue just as it is a difficult issue for everyone in the House. What we have to do is come to a rational understanding of the nature of the nuclear industry and the requisite amounts of liability that should be put in place that will put the industry on a level playing field with other energy sources in the country. To me that is a fundamental thing that should happen here. If we do not do that then as parliamentarians and as legislators we are not fulfilling our role but acting for special interests or acting in a manner that is not compatible with what Canada needs.

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## **39th PARLIAMENT, 2nd SESSION**

**EDITED HANSARD • NUMBER 014**

**CONTENTS**

**Friday, November 2, 2007**

### **Aeronautics Act**

The House resumed from October 31 consideration of the motion that Bill C-7, An Act to amend the Aeronautics Act and to make consequential amendments to other Acts, be read the third time and passed, and of the amendment.

....

**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):**

Mr. Speaker, I congratulate my colleague on addressing the issues around the variations in the aviation industry across the country. One of the good things that we have in Canada is a consistent policy on aviation that covers the country. Mechanics and service technicians, whether they are in one part of the country or the other, are used to a system that is reliable, straightforward and transferrable across the country.

In many of our northern and remote locations, we rely on technicians and mechanics. They are not in a team and they are not in a group like Air Canada, which has thousands of employees. They are single mechanics. They are people who sometimes actually have to fly the planes as well. They are versatile. They are expected to do so much with very limited support, very limited access to spare parts and very limited access to all the things that make a successful aviation industry.

So what are we doing with this bill? We are destroying the conformity of the aviation industry across the country. I have a question for my colleague. When a mechanic in one of these isolated communities who is trying to fix a plane needs to understand the system, would he be better served by having the safety system distributed across the country without any central control, without the level of central control that we have brought to the system over many years?

....

## Aboriginal Affairs

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**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):**

Mr. Speaker, this week's Auditor General's report on the Inuvialuit land claim, the third in a series, shows that no matter whether it is the Conservatives or Liberals, they are missing in protecting and developing the north. Right across the north, failure to implement claims has dragged down the progress of aboriginal people and the north.

The Auditor General's call for a strategic approach to building the north is important. So far, the government has taken an ad hoc militaristic approach.

How can northerners believe that anything will change with this Conservative government?

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**Mr. Rod Bruinooge (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, CPC):**

Mr. Speaker, I would like to inform my hon. colleague that our government has obviously looked at this report from the Auditor General quite closely. We are working toward progress with the Inuvialuit, and in this region, we are also assisted by the Government of the Northwest Territories and the regional bodies as well.

However, I would like to acknowledge that not since Prime Minister Diefenbaker has there been a prime minister that has been so interested and supportive of the north. I would like to commend our Prime Minister for all the action he has taken on behalf of northern communities.

\* \* \*

....

## Aeronautics Act

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-7, An Act to amend the Aeronautics Act and to make consequential amendments to other Acts, be read the third time and passed, and of the amendment.

....

**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):**

Mr. Speaker, I, too, am concerned about aircraft safety. It has been a part of my life through my years of living in the north and travelling through very many different conditions. However, that is not what I am focusing on here. I am focusing on what the guiding reasons were behind the development of this bill.

Was it to reduce the government's cost in providing a regulatory oversight to the industry? Was it to reduce the cost to the consumer? Was it to harmonize the Canadian regulations on aircraft safety in the industry across North America so that perhaps in the future we could see that our skies would be open within Canada to competition from foreign carriers?

What were the guiding principles that brought this bill forward at this time?

....

## Aeronautics Act

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-7, An Act to amend the Aeronautics Act and to make consequential amendments to other Acts, be read the third time and passed, and of the amendment.

....

### **Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):**

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak to Bill C-7 because I come from a northern environment where air traffic is essential to the very nature of the communities.

As well, I grew up on an airport. My father was an airport manager and worked for the Department of Transportation for 30 years. I think right now he would be very annoyed with me if I did not stand up and speak out on the issues surrounding air safety.

For my hon. colleagues in the Conservative Party who seem to think that a voice in the House of Parliament is something that is not important, that someone showing a side of Canada that perhaps is not fully represented here is somehow degrading to the House, is an unfortunate turn of words. I am here to represent my constituents as best as possible on a matter of serious significance to them.

When we think of aircraft safety, we think of maintenance safety, and when we look at those issues we can look at anecdotal examples. I can think of what happened last week in Sweden where corrosion on a part of the landing gear on one of our Canadian built planes resulted in the plane collapsing on the runway. Luckily there were no civilian deaths but it was a situation that happened because of maintenance schedules that obviously were not adequate for the situation the plane was in.

When we talk about maintenance schedules on aircraft, we have a great concern with that process.

I will give another example. I was at the Edmonton airport last year in the winter waiting to go north on a scheduled aircraft carrier. We all trooped aboard the plane and then we sat and waited. The pilot finally did an inspection and found a football sized dent in the rear aileron. This, obviously, was missed by the maintenance staff even though they did have a maintenance schedule in place. The plane was emptied and on we went.

I, as well as everyone else on that flight, would like to understand why that happened. With the absence of the proper ability to access that information we will not have those answers. Without careful attention to a regulatory and inspection process that can guarantee that we have high standards of maintenance, we can see this sort of thing occurring all the way down the line.

I will take a step backward and speak to the aircraft industry as a whole. In the north especially we are being impacted by changing climate conditions. This fall alone we have seen major problems in airport shutdowns in Norman Wells and in Inuvik for a whole four days. Our diamond mines lost four days of production.

We see these problems all over because of the changing climatic conditions and yet the past government reduced the federal government's role in maintaining aviation weather reporting. Many of our airports across the north do not have adequate weather equipment or observers on the ground providing information on a regular basis even though these conditions are changing. The travelling public is at risk.

Last year I flew out of Inuvik on a plane when the weather had changed. There is enormous pressure to fly in the north because people are trying to meet schedules, industrial activity is ramping up and everything is going much faster.

(1315)

When the plane left Inuvik we flew 50 miles and never went more than 200 feet off the ground. I was not too concerned because I was flying over the delta where there are no hills higher than 200 feet. Although I knew it probably was not legal, we went along with it.

When we returned to the airport in Inuvik, I found the same weather system had resulted in a tremendous tragedy for that airline company about 200 miles away. One of its airplanes flew into a hill in the same weather system and under the same kinds of pressures to deliver passengers when the weather conditions were so difficult.

What we did with eight aircraft and weather safety as a cost cutting measure with Transport Canada when its policy impacted on us for many years is something that is an object lesson that we should apply to aircraft maintenance as well. We need to have a strong system in this country that is run by the government and one that guarantees aircraft maintenance is carried out in a proper fashion.

Of the 27 public airports in the Northwest Territories, only 6 have paved runways, the other 21 have gravel runways and 23 airdromes are certified. The others are registered airdromes.

The Northern Air Transport Association called on the government to increase the length of northern runways and to improve the instrument landing systems available everywhere. We may talk about northern sovereignty but most of our military planes cannot land anywhere in the north because the runways are too short. The instrument landing systems are not adequate. It is the federal government's responsibility to maintain a standard for all Canadians across this country. We have privatized airports. We have caused these issues by our relentless concern over the bottom line.

The Prime Minister is proposing a deep seaport at Nanisivik. He should consider that the airport at Nanisivik has difficulty with fog conditions many times during the year. Once again, the condition of aviation in the north has deteriorated with the changing climate. We need a different response other than the government saying that it is getting out of inspecting the maintenance conditions of aircraft.

In 2004, a total of 93,000 aircraft arrived and departed N.W.T. airports. That figure is up almost 15% from the year before and 25% from the year before that. We are seeing an enormous increase in traffic in the north and yet we have small carriers that rely on maintenance staff that are transient in nature. If we had a strong Canada-wide system, the transient maintenance system may not be that bad, but when we start breaking down maintenance systems by individual aircraft companies, when we start setting standards in a fashion where the technicians and mechanics who service these planes will need to re-learn every time they join a new company, these are difficult issues for aircraft maintenance and safety. Bill C-7 would create these difficulties.

We can say that we have kept some inspectors, and I understand that is the case, but if we degrade the inspection system in Canada by reducing the personnel, we will not have the same quality of system at the end of the day.

Yes, I stand up and ask questions about Bill C-7, absolutely. I support the work of our previous transport critic, the member for Burnaby-New Westminster. In his discussions with me, he indicated that the bill was moving in the right direction. However, he felt that the work they had done in bringing the amendments forward at the last moment had changed. He felt that all the good words and all the goodwill that was on that committee evaporated at the end.

That was the problem last June. Our former transport critic asked us to stand up and talk about this bill because many of the issues that we had assumed would be included and taken care of through amendments were just not happening.

(1320)

The level of air safety achieved in commercial aviation is, in no small part, the result of adding levels of responsibility. The delegation or devolution proposals of Bill C-7 go directly against this principle of redundancy. By removing regulatory oversight, we effectively remove a fallback position. However, that does not seem to be of concern to some members of Parliament, to the two larger parties that have such a strong principle of laissez-faire business in this country.

By reducing the inspection level and eliminating the ongoing development of a federally controlled and regulated air transport system, the government is going in a direction that we in the NDP do not consider appropriate. I am sure most Canadians would support us if they were to look at what the bill would create and the direction in which it

would move us, just as we have seen in the rest of the deregulation of the aircraft industry across this country.

Transport Canada's own documents admit that the level of air safety has not substantially improved during the past 10 years. This is a reversal of the past history of commercial aviation where safety records were constantly improving. What is happening, why is it happening and how would this bill change that?

The bill is going to change it for the worse. It is going to continue the process that is going on now, where, through the deregulation of the industry, more and more of the decisions are being taken by people on the ground in situations where cost becomes a factor. How can we support this bill? How can we be assured that what we are doing is in the best interest of Canadians?

Studies have shown that the European community has an enviable aviation safety record and yet Europe has not and is not delegating or devolving its safety responsibilities to private designated organizations. The United States, which was the first to engage in economic deregulation, is not deregulating safety.

After Enron, Hollinger and WorldCom, governments are strengthening their regulation and enforcement of corporate governance. If we cannot rely on corporate directors and their audit committees to regulate financial activities with shareholders' money rather than when public lives are at stake, how can we count on the boards of directors of private aviation concerns, whose legal duties are to shareholders, to take full accountability for previously regulated areas of passenger safety? These are questions that the bill skirts. These are questions that Canadians do not want ignored.

There can be only one goal in aviation safety. It is not to understand how we can nickel and dime the system in order to provide a lower cost to compete with other carriers. The only goal should be the highest possible level of safety, which is what we are after and why we are standing up one after another speaking to the bill. It is not because we have any other interests at heart at all. It is not because we have the interests of large businesses or of large unions. It is because we have the interest of public safety in our minds.

Euphemisms, such as risk management, best practicable level of safety and commensurate with cost effectiveness, are not the kinds of words that we use. They are not the kinds of words that work for northerners.

(1325)

We northerners have a difficult enough time travelling throughout the north. We do not want it made more difficult. We do not want our airline companies to be pushed to the limit even more through competition, through larger companies coming in, where they are taking risks that they know are risks and where they are taking risks that perhaps they do not know are risks.

This bill does not answer the questions for me. This bill does not answer the questions for northerners.

When we stand up here, we stand up for a good reason. We stand up for a purpose. We will continue to stand up on this. For all those who are flying in airplanes across this country and who may be listening to this debate, I urge them to speak to their MPs and ask their MPs to tell them whether this bill is going to increase their safety in the air. If those MPs can give them a good answer, then those MPs should be saying it here in the House of Commons.

....

**Mr. Dennis Bevington:**

Mr. Speaker, I just want to mention that the working conditions for mechanics and for technicians on aircraft vary considerably across the country. I have seen mechanics out working with Herman Nelson heaters under tarps when fixing aircraft, because of course their airlines do not have the luxury of a heated hangar.

These are people who ensure that aircraft fly at all times of the day and night in very bad conditions. I grew up with many of them and my heart goes out to them because

they are sincerely trying to do the best job. However, when I spoke to them about this bill, they all had serious concerns. When I spoke to senior mechanics about the nature of this bill, they said no to it.

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## **39th PARLIAMENT, 2nd SESSION**

**EDITED HANSARD • NUMBER 017**

**CONTENTS**

**Thursday, November 15, 2007**

### **Canada Elections Act**

....

**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):**

Mr. Speaker, my colleague has put forward many good arguments. Over the past while in Parliament, before the summer break, we worked diligently on this issue trying to understand what was driving the government agenda in actually developing Bill C-31 in the first place.

Is it a question of voter fraud? We had four cases of voter fraud in the last four elections. That is not sufficient to bring forward an act to this Parliament.

Is it a question that somehow our system of voting is under scrutiny, that the elaborate system of returning officers, scrutineers and the complete system of Canadian voting, which is probably one of the best in the world, is somehow under suspicion? Are we letting too many people through the gate? Is it because some people walking into the polls are unable to identify themselves in many instances?

Yes, there are some problems but did it require this kind of authoritarian hammer that came down in terms of Bill C-31? Or, is this something else? Is this really about social conditioning? Is the bill one of the steps that is leading us toward a more authoritarian state where everything we do must be qualified with some form of identification, where we are moving toward government identity cards and where we are taking the steps that will lead us to a society that Canadians will not like? Or, are the steps being taken small ones so that Canadians will be conditioned to accept this kind of burden?

What does my hon. colleague think was the motive behind the government moving ahead with this legislation, wasting our time in Parliament and creating a situation where, in the next election, we will have massive confusion at the polls, which will turn many people off voting? What was the government's purpose in all of this?

....

### **Canada Elections Act**

**[Government Orders]**



The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-18, An Act to amend the Canada Elections Act (verification of residence), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

....

**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):**

Mr. Speaker, it is not with great pleasure that I stand today to debate Bill C-18.

As a member from a northern riding, I am debating a bill that may solve some of the issues within our riding, but it does not really get at the essential nature of the change in the voting system that will disenfranchise many people and will create great confusion and hardship in voting, at least in the next election, if not many other elections into the future.

When I stand today to speak to Bill C-18, I truly want to speak to Bill C-31. I want to speak to a bill that, in its nature, I cannot support. Its nature will change the way Canadians view their essential political rights in our country. It is a bill that I do not understand and I do not see where the direction is. I have to go back in some ways to Bill C-31 to look at some of the reasons given by our government members in putting forward the bill.

The member for Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre spoke to the bill on June 18. He said:

What we are trying to do, by presenting a bill that will give increased and expanded voting opportunities for all Canada, is attempt to raise the level of voter turnout because.

To say that by creating these types of conditions that need to be in place for the voter to vote, we will increase the voter turnout in this country is, by any stretch of the imagination, patently absurd.

He went on to say, which is something more personal:

I think there is no greater fraud that could be perpetrated on Canadians than that of an individual voting in a federal or provincial election who pretends to be someone that he or she is not.

That is quite a significant fraud. We have seen greater fraud in the House over the past two years with the member for Vancouver Kingsway. He did not even take the time for the House to open up before he jumped across the floor and demonstrated his utter contempt for the voters who elected him. That is a greater fraud by far than a single voter who may misinterpret where he or she is supposed to vote or may make a mistake in the location of his polling station.

At the same time, the Minister for Democratic Reform spoke. He said:

As I have mentioned on other occasions, this bill makes a number of changes to the electoral process that will reduce the opportunity for electoral fraud, improve the accuracy of the national register and the lists of electors, facilitate communication with the electorate and improve the administration of elections.

Let us look at some of those statements. He said "Improve the accuracy of the national registry". Where, in any of the discussions we have had over the past while, do we see a better enumeration system? Clearly, that is one thing we need. Many of the problems we have in the voting system in Canada come from the attempts of the current government and previous governments to reduce the work and the effort that is put into the enumeration system across the country. That is one of the serious problems we have with voting.

This bill and Bill C-31 will not change that. They will not make the system more complete. They will not ensure that people are carefully enumerated and that we have the kind of system that our parents and grandparents built up over many years.

(1635)

Will it facilitate communication with the electorate? I do not see how that will happen with these two bills. What we are going to see is a situation in which many people will find, for one reason or another, that they do not have the proper identification or the proper address or that the address does not match. They are going to be turned off voting.

That is going to happen with a lot of very young voters. That is going to happen with voters who are in disadvantaged situations across this country, the homeless, the poor

and the people who have to work long hours and do not have the opportunities that others do.

I know that federal employees have consecutive hours off work in order to vote. The people who are less advantaged across this country will find it more difficult to vote. They are going to have to ensure that on voting day they carry their identification and make even more of an effort than they are accustomed to in many cases to carry out what is their fundamental, democratic right in this country.

The government is responsible for the bills that it brings forward and for the accuracy and the scrutiny that should go into every piece of legislation that is as important as this one, as important as this legislation that goes to the fundamental nature of our democratic system, which is the right and the ability to vote and the certainty that a voter has when he goes into the voting booth.

The government has completely failed Canadians here. It has brought forward another piece of legislation wherein they are attempting to fix their mistakes yet it does not go far enough. Our party says that if the government wants to fix the mistakes in Bill C-31 then it should go back to what the NDP said previously.

What we proposed previously was to allow the voters to swear that they are who they say they are at the polling station. Then, if there is doubt about the identity of the voter, the voter would put forth sworn testimony that they are who they are and they have the eligibility to vote in that riding. That is trust in Canadians and Canadians deserve our trust.

In the last four elections, where probably in excess of 60 million votes were cast, there have been four cases of voter fraud. All this work that we have been doing in Parliament is taking a big sledgehammer and knocking down a tiny gnat. That is voter fraud in Canada. This bill is a huge sledgehammer.

Then, as for improving the administration of elections, Bill C-31 is going to turn the next election day into a fiasco. We are going to have hundreds of thousands of people, millions of people, standing at polling stations across the country, people who do not understand the rules, who do not have the proper identification and who do not have everything lined up. Canadians are used to voting one way and they will come out to vote and find that the rules have been completely changed. The administration of elections in this next period will be a mess. It will reflect badly on this country and on the voting process of many citizens.

I find these reasons to be bogus at best.

Let us look at what is going on here. We are taking the time now to bring a bill forward that will assist Bill C-31 and some of the errors that were made in that bill in terms of the layout. I heard the comments today from the Conservative government that the opposition did not pick up on these mistakes in committee and therefore it is the fault of the opposition that the bill is not correct.

Why are we doing this? The most cynical bone in my body says that this is a social conditioning exercise.

It will be followed by other social conditioning exercises to ensure that Canadians slowly give up their individual freedoms and slowly find that they have to show identification for whatever they are doing at every step of the way in this country. I do not like that. I still feel that Canadians are trustworthy and that we should encourage trust among Canadians. The concept of continually asking Canadians for their identification at every possible opportunity is the wrong road to go down. Those are my views on dealing with those issues.

(1640)

I would like to move on now to issues that concern my riding.

Last month I had the opportunity to attend a meeting at Paulatuk, a community high on the Arctic coast. We talked about photo ID and identification. There is no place in Paulatuk to get identification. The residents have to go to Inuvik, which requires a plane flight, to get any kind of identification. Quite obviously, many of the residents do not have current identification. They do not need it in Paulatuk because everybody knows everybody.

When people in Paulatuk go to the polls on election day, the returning officer is going to ask for verification for all kinds of people and they will not have the required identification. They do not have the opportunity to go to Inuvik. They do not have the opportunity to get that set up. That will make a travesty out of a community's life. People who have known each other throughout their whole lives will have to show identification to each other.

That is a difficulty. That is a fundamental problem within this legislation. It does not deal with the honest and trustworthy nature of Canadians. It does not consider that. Unless someone proves who they are, says this legislation, they must not be who they say they are.

In fact, even if an elector has identification but it is not quite what is wanted, as I have said, what happens is that under proposed subsection 3.2, "a deputy returning officer, poll clerk, candidate or a candidate's representative who has reasonable doubts concerning the residence of an elector" appearing in front of them "may request that the elector take the prescribed oath". We are putting it in the hands of all those people to decide the trustworthiness of that Canadian, but we are not allowing the Canadian himself to say that he is trustworthy and give his oath that he is a citizen and is legally within the jurisdiction and has the right to vote. To me, that is the solution we should be going forward with.

The changes that are going to be made with this bill will help a problem that has been created by Bill C-31, but will not help the problems inherent within it. They will also discourage Canadians from voting. They will reduce the already pathetic voter turnout in this country. They will probably reduce it among those who should vote, those who are disenfranchised from the system, those who need to express their opinions on politicians and the people who run this country.

This is a difficult situation for anyone who did not support Bill C-31. We are being asked to repair some damage that the bill caused, not nearly all of it, but we are still going to leave our electoral system in chaos in the next election. The government is still not providing a decent rationale for its actions. It is not coming clean with Canadians about what it is trying to accomplish here.

To me, Bill C-18 is totally inappropriate because it does not go far enough toward fixing the problems that have been created with the other bill. Until the government realizes the fundamental mistakes it made in the previous legislation, how is it going to fix them with this patchwork? How is the government going to make the changes that are going to make this work for Canadians in the next election and elections in the future? It is not. That is the problem.

(1645)

We can send this bill to committee. We can try to work with other parties in Parliament to fix errors in a bill that is not appropriate, but that is not good enough. For Canadians, one of the only hopes we have now is what is happening with the charter challenge on Bill C-31. It is being challenged in our courts for its unreasonable nature in terms of our fundamental rights as Canadian citizens.

We will have to wait and see. Perhaps this problem will be solved for us by the courts, but that is a crying shame when we look at what has happened here in Parliament with this kind of legislation and the direction the government has taken. It is a real shame.

I am disappointed in the government. I am disappointed for my constituents. I do not want any of my constituents not to be able to vote, whether they are students travelling from one community to the other or transient people who have changed their address but have not changed it on their identification. Whatever the problem is, we will see problems with this bill that are hard to judge today, but they definitely will show up on election day. It will cast the whole system into some considerable doubt and will create a lot of pressure for change after the next election.

I do not know what we were doing when we brought forward Bill C-31 or what the thinking was there, but as a Canadian, as someone who prizes my right to vote and the right of every other citizen to vote comfortably and cleanly without any conditions put on that right, I am not happy with this. I do not think the bill is appropriate. I certainly hope

that the courts will adjudge the same. That will solve the problem for us and bring it back to the reality of our electoral system, our voting system, which has worked well for us.

If there were examples of large scale fraud that came before the courts, we might have a case to say that we needed to be more vigilant here. We should have opened up the whole act and looked at how to review it to ensure that deputy returning officers and poll clerks all have the proper authority to deal with the issues that come in front of them. Instead, we took this course. Is it a course that is going to work for us? I do not think so. I think we have taken the wrong course and we need to right it.

If this Parliament does not do it, perhaps the courts will. I hope the voters realize this when they go into the voting booth in the next election and realize which parties caused the problems that they see in front of them, when they see the lineups and the people rejected from voting. I hope they think about it when they are going in to vote and I hope they cast their votes accordingly, realizing what the government has done to the system that was working well and was in place, a system that needed more work on the enumeration side and that needed the electoral act to be looked at in certain ways to ensure that the performance of the officers involved in conducting the elections is proper in this day and age.

Those are the things we should have looked at. We can attempt to fix this in a small fashion with this bill. We can fix the problems we have created with Bill C-31, but it is not good enough. It is not good enough and it should not be taking place in this Parliament.

....

**Mr. Dennis Bevington:**

Mr. Speaker, this is not the only problem we have seen with Bill C-31. We just had another with Bill C-6.

....

**Mr. Dennis Bevington:** I can assure my hon. colleague that through this process I have always said that this photo ID requirement for voting is wrong. I have never changed my position on that. I voted against Bill C-31. I did not even want to look at the provisions within it because I felt it was wrong from the beginning.

When it comes to fixing Bill C-31, which is what we are doing now, we are fixing a bill that was only in front of us six months ago. We have two bills in front of Parliament right now that are trying to fix Bill C-31. What a mess we have.

Who is responsible for that mess? Is it the opposition parties? Is it the government that brought it forward? I would say that it is the government's responsibility to bring forward bills that it has scrutinized and that it understands the implications of the bills. They should not be put forward in such a quick fashion that the government does not understand how they will affect hundreds of thousands and millions of Canadians.

....

**Mr. Dennis Bevington:**

Mr. Speaker, I recognize the dilemma that we are in. We have proposed a solution that would deal with the issue. We have proposed that voters would be permitted to take an oath as to their legitimacy in voting in a particular riding at a particular poll. It is a simple solution. Why is it not adequate for the government? Why is it not adequate for the very small number of voter fraud cases that we have in this country? Why are we creating this convoluted mess in this country? Why are we not taking the simple solution?

If the bill goes forward to committee, we will still be asking for a simple solution to this. I do not know whether the amendment would be possible at this point in time. If we have to go ahead with an amended bill that is not amended in a simple fashion but in a more complex fashion, then we will be talking about it when the voters go to the polls. We will be talking about the failure of those parties to deal with the voters' rights.

....

**Mr. Dennis Bevington:**

Mr. Speaker, in my life in the Northwest Territories, I have rarely had to produce photo ID to take out a video at a video store.

One of the Conservatives' problems is mixing the rights in a public government with that of business opportunities and businesses that are conducted in a private fashion. These are two totally different things.

I think something needs to be said about the sanctity of voting in Canada and I am hoping that if we cannot do it here that the courts will do it, the courts will come up with an answer for us about that sanctity and that responsibility of all of us to ensure that everyone has the best possible opportunity to cast their vote in an election. That is what I want, that is why I am standing here today and that is why I have taken the position that I have.

....

**Mr. Dennis Bevington:**

Mr. Speaker, in the Northwest Territories people are centralized. They may be in small communities and then move to larger centres. Issues occur and they become homeless. If those people have identification, it will be, in many cases, a driver's licence, which is a five year document in the Northwest Territories for which we pay \$80. Nobody changes their driver's licence without reason, especially—

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## **39th PARLIAMENT, 2nd SESSION**

### **EDITED HANSARD • NUMBER 018**

#### **CONTENTS**

## **Friday, November 16, 2007**

### **Constitution Act, 2007 (Senate tenure)**

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-19, An Act to amend the Constitution Act, 1867 (Senate tenure), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

....

**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):**

Mr. Speaker, I am not very verbose, but I do tend to use more than 45 seconds.

I want to go back to the point that the hon. Conservative member was making on using senators to fill positions of importance in the cabinet. To my mind, that goes against the principles of this institution. The people who elected members from Montreal were in a--

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# 39th PARLIAMENT, 2nd SESSION

EDITED HANSARD • NUMBER 019

## CONTENTS

### Monday, November 19, 2007

#### Energy

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**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):**

Mr. Speaker, the Conservative government, like the Liberal government before it, has failed to act on a Canada first energy policy. First through NAFTA, then through the North American energy security initiative, and then through the security and prosperity partnership, our future has been eroded.

The Prime Minister talks about Canada as an energy superpower, yet all he does is placate oil and gas multinationals and the will of the United States.

Provincial premiers and Canadian corporate executives are now joined by the National Energy Board in calling on Canada to develop a national energy strategy. The board's new report states:

This plan must be well integrated at the regional level, consider environmental issues and economic growth, and be developed with input from Canadians.

The world is not only facing severe climate disruption, but also the spectre of peak oil production and massive demands on energy from the developing world. Most energy exporting countries are now acting in their best interests. Where is Canada? Why are we squandering--

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**The Speaker:**

The hon. member for Roberval—Lac-Saint-Jean.

\* \* \*

....

#### Question No. 13--

**Mr. Dennis Bevington:**

With regard to the Deh Cho process: (a) what are all of the government's obligations under the Deh Cho First Nations Interim Measures Agreement; (b) what are all of the government's obligations under the Deh Cho Interim Resource Development Agreement; and (c) what are all of the government's obligations under the Deh Cho Land Use Plan?

**Hon. Chuck Strahl (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, CPC):**

Mr. Speaker, the response is as follows:

a) and b) Section 7 of the Dehcho First Nations framework agreement provides that the Dehcho process be a transparent and open process. The interim measures agreement and interim resource development agreement, therefore, can be found with the respective agreements online at <http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/DehCho>

c) All information pertinent to the proposed interim Dehcho land use plan may be found in the interim measures agreement which is available publicly online at <http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/DehCho>

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# 39th PARLIAMENT, 2nd SESSION

## EDITED HANSARD • NUMBER 020

### CONTENTS

## Tuesday, November 20, 2007

### Question No. 12--

**Mr. Dennis Bevington:**

With regard to a national energy strategy: (a) what is the government's position on the development and implementation of a national energy strategy; and (b) are there current impediments developing and implementing a national energy strategy and, if so, what are they?

**Hon. Gary Lunn (Minister of Natural Resources, CPC):**

Mr. Speaker, the response is as follows:

Government of Canada is committed to building a strong and distinctive energy advantage. We understand that energy is critically important to our Canadian way of life and long-term economic growth. Canada is the only stable, democratic country in the world with growing energy export capacity.

Our energy policy is guided by the principles of a free and competitive market, respect for the provinces' jurisdiction as the direct managers of Canada's resources and targeted initiatives to protect the health and safety of Canadians, e.g. pipeline regulation, and environmental sustainability.

We recognize that the production and use of energy, particularly fossil fuels, generate air emissions that contribute to smog and negatively affect the health of Canadians. Our challenge is to ensure that we become a clean superpower. Canada has a responsibility to produce and use energy wisely.

Initiatives under our government's ecoACTION plan are practical actions that combine economic opportunity with environmental and social sustainability. We are focused on three areas: renewable energy, energy efficiency and science and technology.

To promote renewable power, we have committed \$1.5 billion through the ecoENERGY renewable initiative to put 4,000 megawatts of clean energy on the grid. In budget 2007, we increased access to accelerate capital cost allowance for industries generating cleaner energy and provided \$2 billion over the next seven years to provide incentives to producers in the biofuel sector.

To improve energy efficiency, we have launched the \$300 million ecoENERGY efficiency initiative which includes measures to encourage the construction, operation and retrofit of more energy efficient buildings and houses. We are also strengthening the energy performance standards under the Energy Efficiency Act and regulating fuel consumption in motor vehicles.

Our promotion of clean energy technology through the \$230 million ecoENERGY technology initiative is focused on accelerating the development and market readiness of technology solutions in clean energy supply. We recently added \$85 million through federal granting councils for research on key priorities on energy and the environment.

The federal energy policy will continue to serve Canadians well and to provide benefits in a number of areas, such as: maintaining and enhancing the prosperity of Canadians; providing a secure supply of energy for Canadians and Canadian industry; and producing energy in a sustainable manner consistent with our environmental objectives.

The elements that compose the federal energy policy will continue to evolve so that Canada can meet the challenges and benefit from opportunities that arise in international and domestic energy markets and accommodate new technologies and new cleaner energy sources as they become commercial. The federal energy policy is sound but not static and we will continue to look for ways to improve this approach through dialogue with Canadians, which include all levels of government, industry and other stakeholders.

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## **39th PARLIAMENT, 2nd SESSION**

**EDITED HANSARD • NUMBER 022**

**CONTENTS**

**Thursday, November 22, 2007**

**Question No. 14--**

**Mr. Dennis Bevington:**

With regard to the Northern residents tax deduction: (a) what is Canada's total annual lost revenue for each of the previous five years, broken down by province and territory, through the use of this deduction; (b) what would be the estimated lost tax revenue to the government if the residency portion of the deduction was increased by 50 per cent; and (c) what is the rationale for not ensuring that this deduction remains current with inflation?

(Return tabled)

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## **39th PARLIAMENT, 2nd SESSION**

**EDITED HANSARD • NUMBER 024**

**CONTENTS**

**Monday, November 26, 2007**

**Petitions**

Hockey

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**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):**

Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition to the Minister of Canadian Heritage from the community of Deline in the Northwest Territories.



That community is the rightful birthplace of hockey, as in Sir John Franklin's writings in the early 1800s, he indicated the game was being played on the ice on Great Bear Lake in front of the community.

This petition, which carries the names of many of the community's members, is something I am very proud to present. I hope that the Canadian historical record will soon indicate that Deline, Northwest Territories is the home of Canadian hockey.

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## 39th PARLIAMENT, 2nd SESSION

EDITED HANSARD • NUMBER 025

CONTENTS

### Tuesday, November 27, 2007

#### Northern Regulatory Improvement Initiative

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**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):**

Mr. Speaker, the appointment of Neil McCrank, the former chair of the Alberta Energy and Utilities Board, as the minister's special representative for northern regulatory reform is causing concern across Canada's north.

During his time there, that agency moved from working for the public's interest to working for the interests of the big oil and gas companies. The agency ignored the concerns of Fort McMurray, approving one oil sands project after another. The result was homelessness, overstressed municipal services and increased crime.

The regulatory system in the north was created to ensure that northerners' concerns were addressed. Northerners do not want to see the small amount of control they have over development reduced in favour of the interests of big business.

If the minister wants to improve the regulatory process in the north, he can begin by completing the implementation of the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act, especially parts 5 and 6, which deal with land use planning and cumulative environmental monitoring.

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## 39th PARLIAMENT, 2nd SESSION

EDITED HANSARD • NUMBER 029

CONTENTS

# Monday, December 3, 2007

## Budget and Economic Statement Implementation Act, 2007

The House resumed from November 30 consideration of the motion that Bill C-28, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 19, 2007 and to implement certain provisions of the economic statement tabled in Parliament on October 30, 2007, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

....

**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):**

Mr. Speaker, as I did not catch all of my colleague's speech I am curious as to whether he raised the issue of the northern residents tax deduction. It is not in this budget bill.

The Conservatives are moving ahead with changes to the tax system that has not been updated for a long time. The northern residents tax deduction has not been updated in 20 years. People across the north are just crying out that the cost of living is driving them out of the north and is not allowing them to have useful and productive lives.

Does the hon. member support raising the northern residents tax deduction to 50% higher than what it is today just to get it back in line with inflation which has lowered that benefit over the last 20 years?

....

**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):**

Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak to Bill C-28. The bill lumps together all the different changes that were proposed this year for the tax system. It also includes a number of other rather interesting things which have come out of the budget that I hope to have a chance to expound on a little today.

We have a problem with the direction the government is taking in the budget. It is wrong headed. The Conservatives are moving the country in the wrong direction.

The country is experiencing a great outflow of resources and energy. This has led to a very significant surplus of government revenues. That is a wonderful situation to be in, but it happens to be the cusp of the situation. What is proposed at the cusp is to cut the legs out of the government and future governments that will have to deal with Canadians' issues as they go forward by cutting revenue. Cutting \$190 billion over five years will likely to lead us into a deficit situation, either financially or in the kinds of services and support that we provide to Canadians with their own money.

Canadians were not crying out for tax cuts. They were not standing in the streets waving the flag demanding tax cuts. No. The move for tax cuts has been rather different. It has been directed by the government. It follows a trend that was set by our friends to the south with the Republican government that was elected in 2000. It is completely backward. The U.S. government is in a tremendous deficit. That deficit is extraordinary and is only getting worse. Are we seeing the same pattern today? My sense is that we are.

I want to speak to the corporate tax cuts. The logic used for the corporate tax cuts is that they will do wonderful things for the economy and for workers, that they will increase workers' wages and that they will make our economy work that much better.

The Canadian economy is not the same as every economy in the world. It is like some of them. It is like that in Russia and Qatar, countries that export resources. The value in our economy comes from minerals, oil and gas, diamonds, and so on. That is where the real wealth comes from in our economy and we are exporting it.

Companies that are taking advantage of our resources, and quite rightfully so, are in a position to make great profits right now. Those profits are escaping us as Canadians. Those are the opportunities that represent for our children and grandchildren the

reinvestment of the resource revenue that we are expending right now. In doing that, we are robbing the piggy banks of our children. Government revenues from those areas in the Canadian economy are extremely important. We cannot sell ourselves out. We cannot sell our children out.

I am not against corporate tax cuts if they are incentives for regions that really require the effort. We met with members of the Canadian Hydrogen Association two weeks ago. They talked about their burgeoning industry with great opportunities for innovation and development and that they needed money. We asked them if they supported the corporate tax cuts that are taking the money out of the government coffers, which means it is not available to invest in and to grow the kinds of businesses that we need to make a good future for Canada. They were silent. They need to get out there and express that in the corporate world.

(1315)

I come from the north where wealth is generated from resources. Wealth flows from that region every day, yet the people who live in that region, who work in the mines and on the pipelines and in every sense are part of the explosion of the Canadian economy, are not getting the tax break they got 20 years ago. It has been degraded since then with nothing added to it. The cost of living has gone up tremendously for us.

The deal that was struck 20 years ago by the previous Progressive Conservative government has evaporated due to inflation. The current government is not talking about putting it back into place for those people who are making this economy work. I do not think that is fair. There is talk about the capital gains exemption in this budget and how we need to make that fair by raising it 50% to bring it up from where it was 20 years ago, but when it comes to northerners and our tax breaks, the government is remarkably silent. It is a sad fact.

Something that I am finding difficult with Bill C-28 is that part 9 talks about amending the Canada Oil and Gas Operations Act. What are the reasons? They are very simple reasons. It is not working quite right. Should it be included in this bill? Should it be done in the way it is being done right now? No. These changes are part of the reregulation of the north. They are directed toward the north and they are going to impact on our development of pipelines in the north for Canadians.

In the budget plan, these amendments were to be made and a consultation process was to be done. To quote the budget plan:

The Government will develop, for consultation, legislative amendments to address the discrepancy in the regulatory powers of the Board under these two Acts.

That is a great idea. Let us have some consultation. Are we having consultation here? No, we are getting this rammed down our throats. While amendments may be beneficial, in the context of the complexity of those amendments, can we understand simply by accepting them in a two day debate in the House of Commons? No. The government was supposed to consult on them before presenting them to the House of Commons.

Not having consultations is an anti-democratic, hollow action from the so-called accountable Harper government that was going to listen to people. Well it is not listening to people. It is not--

....

**Mr. Dennis Bevington:**

Mr. Speaker, I regret my actions.

In Canada, the National Energy Board just presented a report which said that with all the new sources of natural gas included in the equation, by 2020 we are going to be a net importer of natural gas. It does not refer to our export requirements under NAFTA. We will not be exporting gas by 2020. We will actually be without sufficient gas for our own needs, for heating our own homes. This is the situation with energy right now.

Yes, we need to discuss the Canada Oil and Gas Operations Act. Yes, we need to discuss how we can implement plans to ensure there is fair access to pipelines for all

kinds of companies. However, we have a bigger job and if we do not take up that larger job today, the situation is only going to get worse.

When we talk about the Canada Oil and Gas Operations Act and the National Energy Board, we have to do a little more than simply slide them into a budget address and hope that everybody will ignore it and that we will continue to conduct business in this fashion, which has led us from 1985 where we had a 25 year surplus of natural gas to a situation in the future where we will not have enough for our own needs.

This is not acceptable. We need to move beyond this kind of action of trying to slide something into an act. It is not the way to conduct business in the House of Commons. It is not the proper way to do things for Canadians. It is not the way to understand how serious issues around the regulation of pipelines are going to affect aboriginal people who are landowners, who have land claims and who have constitutional authority in their lands.

It is not the way to deal with governments like the government of the Northwest Territories that is hoping for devolution, where it can actually have a say in how its systems are developed.

It is not good for small Canadian junior gas companies that are competing with one of the largest companies in the world. The only reason the largest company in the world is building a pipeline is to control the access and delivery of gas from its fields, giving it a competitive advantage over our Canadian companies.

These are all issues that need much more examination. They cannot just be thrown into a bill and slid under the table in haste to get this thing done in time for Christmas. What does Christmas hold for Canadians when we are selling them out on the very essentials to heat their homes at Christmas? It is really unfair to all of us.

....

**Mr. Dennis Bevington:**

Yes, Mr. Speaker, and with oil at \$100 a barrel we do not need to target the oil and gas industry for tax cuts. That is not what is required here. That is not going to work. When we see the overall reduction in the corporate tax rate at 15% below that of the United States, we are talking about basically giving our resources away.

In the manufacturing industry, the profits are not large. This industry absolutely needs reinvestment opportunities. It needs to be given the opportunity to change what it is doing and in a fashion that will allow it to be more competitive and allow profits to rise. If we lower the tax rate on industries that are not making a profit, then we are not doing them a heck of a big service. What we want to do is change what these industries are doing so their profits will increase. Then they will not mind paying a reasonable tax to provide services to their country.

....

**Mr. Dennis Bevington:**

Mr. Speaker, 13 years of Liberals and two years of Conservatives have left us in a bad situation with respect to housing in the north. I cannot deny that fact. They cannot deny it either.

We need to move forward on this issue. It is a good thing the NDP got some money in the 2005 budget for housing or otherwise we would be in real bad shape.

....

**Mr. Dennis Bevington:**

Mr. Speaker, as far as I can see, the Conservatives, like the Liberals before them, are against anything that smacks of an industrial strategy that would actually turn the country around. They just seem to want to hold on to the ideology of a market driven approach, and it ain't working.

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# 39th PARLIAMENT, 2nd SESSION

EDITED HANSARD • NUMBER 032

CONTENTS

Thursday, December 6, 2007

## LNG Terminals

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**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):**

Mr. Speaker, the Conservative government has come out against liquefied natural gas tankers travelling through our waters off New Brunswick. The Minister of Foreign Affairs said in September, "We want to protect our people and the environment...The prime minister has been very clear on this".

Before that, when the Prime Minister attended the SPP summit in August, he made the same point that these tankers are too dangerous. He made it to George Bush.

Why is this government not standing up for the people of Quebec who are concerned about these same tankers on the St. Lawrence to the proposed Rabaska terminal?

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**Hon. Lawrence Cannon (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, CPC):**

Mr. Speaker, yes indeed, under the navigable waters portion of the legislation we are looking at this file. We have not yet made a determination. As soon as cabinet has been seized of this issue, we will make our report public.

\* \* \*

....

## Energy

[\[Table of Contents\]](#)

**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):**

Mr. Speaker, on the eve of Bali there are many other considerations about LNG. The government is not showing leadership on energy issues. If it were, it would heed the call from provincial premiers and its own National Energy Board to create a Canada first energy strategy.

Importing LNG from Russia does nothing to build a future for Canadians. When it comes to energy issues, can the minister explain why the government is more concerned with the interests of big business rather than protecting the people of Quebec and Canada?

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**Hon. Gary Lunn (Minister of Natural Resources, CPC):**

Mr. Speaker, the member's comments are absurd. Of course we take all of these matters very seriously. We have a duty and obligation to ensure the supply of energy, but we also first and foremost take the environment seriously in every way, shape and form.

The Minister of the Environment has led the way, bringing in regulations that are changing this country like never before, something that has not happened in 13 years. We are all very proud of his leadership and how he will take our position to Bali. We should all be applauding his efforts.

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## **39th PARLIAMENT, 2nd SESSION**

**EDITED HANSARD • NUMBER 033**

**CONTENTS**

**Friday, December 7, 2007**

### **Budget and Economic Statement Implementation Act, 2007**

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C-28, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 19, 2007 and to implement certain provisions of the economic statement tabled in Parliament on October 30, 2007, as reported (without amendment) from the committee.

....

**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):**

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the minister's statement on this amendment. I am curious about what the minister said in regard to what attracts corporations to invest in this country.

I would say that right now corporations are attracted to investing in this country for our great resource base, one that is accelerating in value. Around the world, resources are at a premium. Many corporations are investing in energy in this country, once again because the energy is here.

Let us talk about the manufacturing sector. One of the largest incentives for manufacturing investment in Canada is our public health care system, which gives us a tremendous advantage over the United States and its private insurance system for employees of large companies.

What we see in Canada is that we have incentives for corporations that are built into, first, what we sell, our raw resources, which are in high demand, and, second, the services we provide to corporations. How are these tax cuts going to improve that situation? How are they going to make that any better?

....

**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):**

Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak to my hon. colleague's statements. I find it somewhat incomprehensible that a member of a party elected by many progressive voters in Quebec would come out with a statement like that on a very serious topic: the complete movement by the government toward reducing corporate taxes, as supported by the Liberals. This is a direction from which we cannot return.

The member has provided many ideas and direction on the need to carefully select areas in the economy for which to provide incentives. We cannot do it if we do not have the revenue base.

By going against the motion, he has set up a future in which the federal government will not have the ability to make the kinds of investments that need to be made to improve industries in his province.

....

## The Environment

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**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):**

Mr. Speaker, a recent report done by the Alberta community of Fort Chipewyan, downstream from the oil sands, found elevated cancer causing chemicals in the water of the Athabasca River. Other reports have shown a clear link between the oil sands development and water pollution.

The federal government is responsible for trans-boundary water pollution. Rather than encouraging even more oil sands development, when will it work to protect the people of northern Alberta and the Northwest Territories?

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**Mr. Mark Warawa (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC):**

Mr. Speaker, the hon. member knows very well that this government is committed to cleaning up the environment.

After 13 long years of Liberal inaction, we now have a \$1.5 billion fund to work with the provinces. We are doing that. We are working with B.C. We are working with Alberta. We are working with every province to clean up the environmental messes left by those people over there.

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....

## Budget and Economic Statement Implementation Act, 2007

The House resumed consideration of Bill C-28, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 19, 2007 and to implement certain provisions of the economic statement tabled in Parliament on October 30, 2007, as reported (without amendment) from the committee, and of Motion No. 1.

....

**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):**

Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to stand today to speak to the amendment that my party has proposed on the economic update statement delivered by the government. Of course, our amendment speaks directly to one aspect of the bill, not all aspects. It speaks to the aspect of the bill that we find most troubling.

We are only being consistent. We were only being consistent in 2005. At that time, we saved the Liberal government from imminent defeat by forcing it to retract a corporate tax cut it was proposing. We had the money reinvested in many programs, some of which are programs that the Conservative Party has taken much credit for over the last while in

regard to the few things it has thrown out to people in Canada in terms of housing and post-secondary education.

Our position is very consistent. It has carried forward over the years. It has carried through different governments. Why is it like that? One reason, quite clearly, is that it is different from that of the other two parties that sit here.

The other two parties that sit here represent corporate interests. In their desire to represent those corporate interests, they have been bidding down the tax system in this country over many years. They have been bidding it down in order to hold the respect and the support of the corporate system in their efforts to get re-elected and hold on to power in this country.

Recently, the leader of the Liberal Party said the Liberals would be moving to the left with a platform that would include measures to aid students in paying for post-secondary tuition, to combat poverty and to support seniors. In order to do that, we need revenue. As a person who came up through the municipal side, and having been a mayor for many years, I know that collecting revenue is the only way that we can institute programs to provide services to people.

The cuts proposed by the Conservatives in their last budget and in this budget update are massive. They stand next to the ones that we just heard about from my Liberal colleague from Richmond Hill, who spoke of the \$100 billion that the Liberals gave up to tax cuts in the early part of this decade.

These tax cuts are in the order of \$190 billion over the next five years. Of that \$190 billion, where is it coming from? Our numbers show that with full implementation of the corporate tax cuts proposed by the government, by 2012 this figure would amount to \$12 billion a year. Let us compare it to the GST cuts. The GST cuts now cost about \$5 billion a year per percentage reduction, so we are going to see a \$10 billion reduction through the GST cuts. On personal tax cuts, the estimate is that they will amount to only \$8.4 billion over a six year period, so they are really not the issue that is of key importance here in terms of raising revenue for the government to deliver the services that Canadians require.

Therefore, when we stand up and say we do not support corporate tax cuts, we do that for a very good reason. Let us look at the profit in the Canadian corporate system, where one-half of the corporate pre-tax profits come from the financial sector and the booming oil, gas and mining sector. Half of the money that we are giving up here comes from two sectors in our economy that are not likely to leave. They are not likely to relocate to some other jurisdiction. They are essentially part of the Canadian economy. The rest of the corporate interests right across this country, from small businesses to large, make up the other percentage.

(1320)

What we in the NDP say when it comes to providing incentives in the economy is that we need to send those incentives in the directions that are required. We do not need blanket corporate tax cuts that do nothing to answer the questions that our colleague from the Bloc raised earlier about the forest industry and the manufacturing sector. Corporate tax cuts do not do it. We are saying no to these cuts and we are hoping that others in the House will see the logic of that and join us in this effort.

Over the last six months, I took the time to look at the mining industry in the Northwest Territories because I felt it was very important to understand its impact. I also did it because the federal government has the final say on all mineral development in the north and makes the decisions about royalties and the direction of investments that may occur as a result of that.

Right now the diamond industry does not need tax cuts. It needs directed investment in infrastructure that can deliver more profit and royalties and can make a better deal for Canadians out of the resource being extracted in that region. Tax cuts will not accomplish that. Tax cuts will not build electrical transmission lines to the Slave Geological Province so we can reduce the costs of the fossil fuels burned to provide energy for the mines. Tax cuts will not build the highways required to get supplies to those areas. None of those will be accomplished through tax cuts. Those things will be accomplished through



government investment in infrastructure that is required to produce more profit for government through increased royalties and taxation.

There is a role in this country for directed investment and I see it quite clearly in my area. When we looked at the opportunity for profits and to expand the diamond mining industry, we saw that there was a role for the federal government in establishing a national diamond strategy. The diamond industry needs a national diamond strategy. Diamond mines are being opened in Ontario and Nunavut. Opportunities also exist in Saskatchewan and Manitoba.

Mining diamonds represents about 10% to 15% of the value of this resource. The way things are going in Canada, we are letting the rest of the value in this very large sector escape the country. This is because the Liberals have a laissez-faire or marketplace attitude toward investment and the Conservatives have the same ideology going on. They are not allowing us as a country to maximize the return from our resources and allowing us to say that we have an interest in making that happen.

Corporate tax cuts will not do that for us. That is not directed investment. That is not what we need right now. Let us get serious. Let us forget the ideology that drives those two larger parties, which may not be so large after the next election, to continue the way they are going.

....

**Mr. Dennis Bevington:**

Mr. Speaker, there was not much of a question there but there was a lot of historical inaccuracies.

We have to look at what happened when the New Democratic Party took over in Saskatchewan from the most corrupt government that Saskatchewan ever had, a Conservative government that ran it into the ground, that is its record.

We can go back in history to look at the kinds of things that have gone on in government. However, what we are saying here is that the government will be taking \$12 billion out of the system by 2012. That needs better emphasis. The government is taking that money, throwing it in the air and allowing it to fall anywhere.

We need to have directed incentives in this economy to help the industries that need help and to move the country forward with infrastructure that can build industry and support industry, rather than this laissez-faire market approach that has driven this country for 20 years. It has driven our energy industry to the point where by 2020 we will be importing natural gas to heat our homes. What kind of a strategy was that? What kind of effort was that? I think the shame of that should stand in front of this Parliament.

....

**Mr. Dennis Bevington:**

Mr. Speaker, once again, I really cannot respond to questions unless I understand the direction that is being taken.

I appreciate the member's concern about the forest industry. I think we need a massive strategy in the forest industry to drive new investment.

Last night I met with the manager of Tembec. We had a very good conversation about how we could actually work within the industry.

....

## **Food and Drugs Act**

The House resumed from November 19 consideration of the motion that Bill C-251, An Act to amend the Food and Drugs Act (warning labels regarding the consumption of alcohol), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

....

**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):**

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise to speak to Bill C-251, a bill that would place labels on bottles for substances containing 1% alcohol. I come from the Northwest Territories where labels have been on bottles for almost 20 years. Therefore, I feel somewhat enlightened on this issue in comparison to many other places in the country.

People in the Northwest Territories have struggled with alcohol issues for a long period of time. There are higher rates of consumption and incarceration. The criminal justice system is taken up with alcohol related issues. We can say what we want about other substance abuse, but the RCMP that polices us and the justice system that enforces penalties speak clearly with one voice. They say that alcohol is the substantive problem within the Northwest Territories.

In the last boom in the Arctic in the seventies, a boom that was artificially enhanced by the super-depletion allowance given to oil and gas companies to explore for oil and gas, we saw an incredible increase in fetal alcohol syndrome disorders in children. In some cases, schools were reporting that over 30% of children could be identified as perhaps having a fetal alcohol effect or fetal alcohol syndrome. This was an enormous problem and a heartbreaking problem in the lives of people. It created cost to society from birth onward. It caused family problems. It had an enormous impact on the population.

Therefore, 20 years ago we put labels on bottles to identify alcohol content for young women who may have drank for the first time or people who did not understand the impact of it. These labels would at least give women some indication that they were putting something very valuable and important at risk if they drank while pregnant. Over the years this action, along with others, has somewhat helped the situation with alcohol abuse in the Northwest Territories. It did not help completely, by no means.

We have also instituted rules that allow individual communities to ban alcohol consumption or to make decisions about alcohol rationing. We have done many things to try to combat the problem because we see the impact on society and in families, and it is still very much the case.

When it comes to supporting labels on bottles for the rest of the country, it is a great idea. The way it is done in the Northwest Territories is pretty simple. The bottles go into liquor stores and the owners and workers have a device similar to a device to put prices on a bottle but with a slightly larger imprint and they put a label on a bottle. It is a simple process, it is not costly and it is effective in providing information to people about the nature of the impact of the content in the bottle.

Six years ago the House voted overwhelmingly for a motion by one of my colleagues from Winnipeg North to put warning labels on bottles of alcohol. However, in the intervening years both the Liberal and Conservative governments have ignored the will of Parliament. I find that strange and unsettling. We have to take account when private members' bill and motions come forward and are supported by Parliament as a whole for the good of the people of Canada. We have to follow up on these things.

(1350)

One private member's initiative, which I respect, was brought forward by a Conservative member. It took the material out of cigarettes that kept them burning after they were put in an ashtray or when it fell out of somebody's hands onto a bed, which caused so many fires and deaths in the country. We got that law and finally after years and years, we changed the system in our country to protect people. It saves lives.

Here we have another private member's bill that pleads with the House and with the government to follow through with things that are good for Canadians. Why are we not going with it? Why are we not making this effort? Why do we have this inertia in the system? Why can we not be more accommodating to the will of Parliament?

On the other side, we could put warning labels about drinking and driving. We could encourage educate people in this regard. We entirely support Mothers Against Drunk Driving, but let us help people understand that drinking and driving is wrong. They can look at the bottle and see, "When you drink this, do not drive, get a cab".

What is wrong with those kinds of instructions to society? For those who like their \$20 bottles of wine, is it demeaning to see a label on the side of it? Have we wrecked the ambience of the drink by putting a label on the bottle? That is part of what we do.

When we put those rather obscene labels on packages of cigarettes, they were a good indicator. They show people what happens, what the results of the overuse of the tobacco product are. We do not argue about them anymore. They are there. Let us do the same thing with alcohol. Let us recognize that. Let us put the labels on the bottles. Let us do something for Canadians that is useful. Let us not get this caught up in the inertia of Parliament and the special interest groups and all those who stand against the will of the people of our country.

We put warning labels on kites so people do not fly them next to power lines. What a good idea, a little indication to somebody to keep the kite away from the power line. Does that hurt people? No. It is a sensible thing to do.

We put warning labels on coffee cups in case people might burn themselves. My goodness, a burn heals a lot faster than a fetus attacked by alcohol in the womb. A little burn on a leg from a cup of coffee does not match up to a lifetime of misery for a family and for the person who has the particular disease or accident of fetal alcohol syndrome.

I totally support the bill. It works in our territory. I ask the rest of Canada to follow suit.

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## **39th PARLIAMENT, 2nd SESSION**

**EDITED HANSARD • NUMBER 035**

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**Tuesday, December 11, 2007**

### **National Sustainable Development Act**

....

**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):**

Mr. Speaker, I do not claim any credit for standing up and improving the noise level in the building, but I am glad to have this opportunity to speak to Bill C-474. The bill deals with sustainable development within the government system and the necessity for a national process for promoting sustainable development.

I am glad to see that our Liberal colleagues have woken up to the requirement for promoting sustainable development. During their many years in government, they did not promote this. The Liberal government's promotion of development throughout its 13 year course was simply to allow the market to make all the decisions, to allow others to take away any sense of industrial strategy, energy, security, any of those things. It simply was not part of their demeanour. They simply acquiesced to the direction that others took. In that process, they put Canada in a very precarious situation, perhaps not for today, but as we move ahead in the future.

The Conservatives have come into power since then and they have proven to be unable to move any further along this road than the Liberals did. That is partly due to their ideological commitment to the marketplace and to the understanding that decisions on complex issues such as sustainable development can be made in a context of profit

and return to investors. Over the last while there has been an unsustainable development process.

My area of expertise is energy. At one point in time Canada kept a 25 year reserve of natural gas for our own protection and to ensure that Canadians would be well equipped to handle future changes. The reserve is now down to nine years. Through the 1990s and the early part of this decade, there was a massive sell-off of natural gas. The alliance pipeline gave the industry the ability to virtually strip whatever resources we had in the western Canadian sedimentary basin. The need to reach out to other forms, such as coal bed methane or farther north supplies, has proven to be difficult and expensive.

The National Energy Board's November 2007 report regarding Canada's energy future clearly states that by 2020 Canada will be a net importer of natural gas. We will have no exports. This situation just boggles the mind. It should be of great interest to this Parliament.

In the development of the tar sands and the massive tax giveaways and royalty breaks set up by the Chrétien and Klein governments in the mid-1990s, we saw the unfettered movement and development of this resource base in a fashion that serves hardly anyone in this country. Things are moving much too fast in the tar sands. Even Albertans are finding that this kind of development is simply not working for them.

The Liberals, after supporting Kyoto, continue to support unsustainable development. They ignored their Kyoto commitments and preferred to let the market make its own way.

(1810)

When we look at tar sands development, probably each barrel of oil is making over 125 kilograms of CO<sub>2</sub> in its production in comparison to conventional oil at 29 kilograms. This situation is simply going to get worse. We have set ourselves on a course of unsustainability in this country that we are going to have a very difficult time turning around.

The Liberals failed as well to provide adequate funding for research and development of renewable energy. Canada was probably the lowest in the western world in investing in solar energy. The new government has made a slight improvement, but nowhere near the investment we should be making.

It is the same with wind power. The Liberal effort in wind power was half the value of the United States' effort and the credit that was given.

We certainly do not want to discourage the sustainable development strategy that is being proposed by the Liberals, but we have to ask what is really important about it. To me, what is important right now in sustainable development in the world is energy. Without a comprehensive energy strategy for this country, a Canada first energy strategy, we will never find our way down the road to sustainable development.

The Liberals and Conservatives, bless their hearts, bought in with the Americans and established a continental energy plan through the North American Energy Working Group and the SPP. They have basically taken the responsibility out of the House and given it to Washington. That is troublesome. In order for us to move toward a sustainable future, it is something they have to recant. They have to give up what they did with our southern neighbour. Without recognizing the inherent problems they have created by linking our energy future with that of the United States, we will not move toward sustainable development in energy.

Looking at this bill from an energy perspective, there are only a few references to energy in the bill. Clause 5 calls for the efficient and effective use of energy. That is a statement that could apply to many things. It could apply to the expansion of existing fossil fuel resources as we quickly deplete them. Clause 5(2)(b) talks about Canada being at the forefront of the clean energy revolution.

To the Minister of Natural Resources clean energy seems to mean nuclear energy. In a sustainable development strategy, one might question whether the production of nuclear energy is the direction in which to go. It is clean but it has inherent problems in many other respects. It is clean in terms of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, but certainly in many other ways it has a limited ability.

We need an approach to energy which sees the sharing of renewable energy across the country through an east-west energy grid. That is one of the key elements in the development. We need to invest in infrastructure to promote sustainability. Investing in the equipment that can lead to a renewable energy future is the direction that we should take. Investing in liquefied natural gas terminals to bring greater amounts of imported fossil fuels to this country is not part of a sustainable development strategy, yet it is something that the Liberals and Conservatives continue to support.

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## 39th PARLIAMENT, 2nd SESSION

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### Wednesday, December 12, 2007

Northern Residents Tax Deductions

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**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):**

Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition to the Minister of Finance from the people of the northern territories.

Some 700 people signed the petition informing the Minister of Finance that the people of Canada's north have the highest cost of living of all Canadians. The northern residents tax deduction was instituted to help offset this high cost of living. The residents portion of the northern residence tax deduction has not increased since its inception 20 years ago while the cost of living for northern Canadians has continued to increase.

The petitioners call on the minister to increase the residents portion of the northern residents tax deduction by 50% and that this portion of the tax deduction be indexed in order to keep pace with inflation based on a northern inflation measurement.

\* \* \*

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## Budget and Economic Statement Implementation Act, 2007

The House resumed from December 11 consideration of the motion that Bill C-28, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 19, 2007 and to implement certain provisions of the economic statement tabled in Parliament on October 30, 2007, be read the third time and passed.

....

**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):**

Mr. Speaker, I recognize that my hon. colleague did not really have his four and a half minutes to speak. I want to go back to some of the other provisions within the act which we see the Liberals now supporting, in particular, the reduction of the GST by 1%.

Originally the Liberals said this was not a good idea. They stood up and said over and over again that this did not work in the economy. It is a decrease of about \$5 billion a year in the country's revenue.

Basically, then, we should take these 100 members--or 95 members, as the Liberal caucus keeps reducing--and divide that number. The Liberal Party's fear of an election has reduced the government's ability to govern by about \$50 million a member over on that side. The Liberals' fear of the electorate has driven them to this incredible point in parliamentary democracy.

I will ask my hon. colleague if he can understand the rationale of the Liberal members. How can anyone stand here representing and speaking for Canadians from the point of view that has carried them through elections, but then turn around and do this to the citizens of Canada? How does that strike my hon. colleague?

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