

That is why the exercise that is going on, this consultation process that will be launched in a few days, is of profound importance for Canada. People are very interested by the fact that we have decided to set up a consultation process before. It is not the way it is done in other countries, but this is also our reputation — to consult people in informal ways, not only through institutions, not only through parliamentary commissions or committees, but ministers and politicians going to see the people and hearing what they have to say, testing their reaction to statements and questions to determine the extent to which we will be able to get political support for tough measures. Do not forget that this will be quite a test for Canada. All of us are reading polls that say Canadians would be ready to do a lot for the environment: lose jobs, pay more taxes, accept radical personal changes.

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This fall Canadians will be asked to live up to what they say. They will have to translate their concerns into concrete commitments. It will be a tough thing for the government. We know a bit about that because we are in the process of enacting tough regulations for the pulp and paper industry and the auto industry. We know their reaction. We need the people. We have to convince the people and we have to push them. In the end the government and Parliament will have enact the proper regulations and legislation.

We are also in the process, in different committees, of drafting the new legislation on the environmental assessment of government projects. We have to have mechanisms for all those questions. I can see that government is also a body. Government machinery is something that exists, something real. It has a culture, with traditional and quite normal resistance to change. It is not only a question of party. Parties are out there promising very nice things. But a government also has tradition. Bureaucracy has tradition. And when it comes to a new law in which the decision-making power would be limited, do not forget that you have to convince a lot of people. We are doing this now.

I think that the next month will be crucial for the environment issue in Canada. It will also be critical for maintaining Canada's reputation in the world as an environmental leader. The joint committee hearings of the last two days have been important — not only in increasing the understanding of global change, but also in building consensus on appropriate policy measures.

I would like to thank all those who have taken part in the parliamentary forum on global climate change, and above all — giving credit where credit is due — I would like to thank the Speaker of the House, Mr. John Fraser. Mr. Fraser is a well-known friend of the environment and we all stand to benefit from his firm commitment to this cause. We should also thank Mr. Brightwell, who first thought of holding this forum, for having set an example of the kind of innovative approach climate change requires.

I would also like to thank very much the distinguished speakers who have come here from the United States and from all over the world. Their contributions will help to enrich our future discussions. They have both informed us and increased our interest in the issue.