

Oral Questions

infrastructure, the need of cities and towns across this country to have funding from the federal government to help them fight pollution by improving their water and sewage systems?

Why won't the government listen to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and recognize that this has to be in its green plan and that we need a national program to deal with what is a national problem that needs help for solution from this government?

• (1420)

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister, President of the Privy Council and Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, the hon. Leader of the Opposition was a member of a government that had been in office for 20 to 25 years. It had every opportunity in the world to put in place an infrastructure program, and all it did was reduce spending to the provinces and to the municipalities.

We are not going to get into a debate on the green plan. The hon. member will have ample opportunity to examine and comment on it tomorrow, and I am sure he will not be disappointed.

[Translation]

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, the government has already misled the Canadian people about its policies on the environment. Funding for the Green Plan will be far below the \$5 billion originally committed. I want to ask the Deputy Prime Minister why his government refuses to upgrade municipal infrastructures and deal responsibly with the people of Quebec. And will he tell Canadians when his government will finally realize that the environment is important to the well-being of the entire country?

Mr. Lee Clark (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, the supplementary is identical to the second question, and therefore my answer is the same as that given by the Deputy Prime Minister.

[English]

Mr. Dave Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Deputy Prime Minister.

The Deputy Prime Minister will know that every Canadian municipality across this country has called

upon the Government of Canada to cost share in a \$15 billion program. Last night I saw and I read the green plan, and there is nothing in that plan which addresses that fundamental problem.

Why is the Government of Canada wimping out with regard to supporting our municipalities concerning water and sewer? Is that not a fundamental program of fighting for the environment?

Mr. Lee Clark (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, I would think that members of the opposition should join with Canadians everywhere in applauding this government for putting into place a program which will be announced tomorrow. It is a long-term environmental action plan, the first such program ever announced in this country, the sort of program that does not exist in very many countries in the world.

Furthermore, what is so important about this program is that it has been put together as a result of consultation with Canadians from coast to coast. It will be the kind of program tomorrow which responsible Canadians, wherever they may be—and maybe even the opposition will join in—will applaud this government for putting in place, the kind of long-term plan we have long needed.

Mr. Dave Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is directed to the Deputy Prime Minister.

In view of that answer and in view of the fact that the parliamentary secretary has now admitted that there is no money for municipal infrastructure, I want to ask the Deputy Prime Minister why the green plan has nothing with regard to a 20 per cent reduction by the year 2005 of national 1988 CO₂ emission levels, why it fails to have a Canadian environmental bill of rights, why it fails to have a national carbon tax, why it fails to bring western provinces into a national acid rain reduction program, and why the Government of Canada has reduced the moneys for the green plan from \$5 billion to \$3 billion, a 40 per cent reduction? Why?

Mr. Lee Clark (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, one of the things that seems to happen around here on Monday when it has been a quiet weekend is that the opposition parties do the same thing that our friends in the gallery do: they write speculative stories about what will come tomorrow because they cannot wait in anticipation.