

p.m. today, and I urge you to go over yourselves. I have been too busy to do more than say hello to them, but go over and talk to the people there—non-government agencies, a lot of them, particularly two student groups. So I urge you to support the environmental fair.

I am pleased that the Minister of the Environment, the Hon. Lucien Bouchard, could find time in a very busy schedule to come and speak to us today very briefly and to wind up the program for the environmental forum. Mr. Bouchard, I give you the floor.

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Minister of the Environment): Ladies and gentlemen, dear friends, nothing is more true than what Mr. Brightwell has just said about the fact that environment is a non-partisan issue. But at the same time I could not help seeing a paradox in the fact that this great non-partisan meeting was being held in the room where the national Tory caucus is meeting each week.

I think this meeting is very helpful, and I also think that it helps us to realize that global climate change is a complex issue requiring concerted action by all sectors of society. In particular, energy policies, agricultural and forestry practices, and land use options will have a significant impact on climate change.

This parliamentary forum has been a unique event which recognizes the need for consideration of the issue by all sectors of society. New approaches and new kinds of co-operation are required to respond to the threat of global climate change.

Last week in Washington, policy makers from 17 countries convened to discuss the issue of global warming and, more generally, global environmental change. Importantly, nations agreed on the necessity for action in the face of uncertainty. As President Bush said in his closing remarks, research is no substitute for action. And action is the key word. We must act now.

Canada is a full participant in international fora dealing with the climate change issue. The White House conference was one in a continuum of such meetings, each of which takes us a step closer to the signing of a convention for the protection of the atmosphere and significant protocols under that convention.

Just a word about the Washington White House conference last week. This conference was very interesting. I know that there have been reports on the differences of views between mainly the European and American delegations. It is true that during the first day the impressions and the perceptions from the people coming from Europe were rather negative. They thought that the Americans, in trying to promote research, economic assessments, were trying to dilute the issue and to pre-empt the conference that will be held in Geneva next November just after the tabling of the very important report of the IPCC on what countries should and can do in terms of targets and schedules.

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But during those first days it was obvious that there is a dimension very important in environment: it is the political aspect, the political pressure. We all generally in Canada and