

that was set in the international convention for the year 2000. We were set to go for 1997.

I am here today to say to the member that we are ready to go further. We think that we can eliminate CFCs by 1995, a good part of them. We are going to push other countries within the international framework to go even further than that.

Furthermore, we are going to do it in co-operation with the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment and the provinces with which we have had a great deal of success in dealing with environmental issues.

**Mrs. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians take this problem very seriously; it appears far more seriously and concrete than the minister. This is an emergency.

In 1990 the minister promised that if provincial regulation and voluntary actions did not produce results, Canada would regulate. I did not hear that word from the minister today.

Now that the minister knows this *laissez-faire* attitude is not working, will he bring in the regulations under the Environmental Protection Act now?

**Hon. Jean J. Charest (Minister of the Environment):** Mr. Speaker, I think it is important that we be as precise as possible about what we are talking about here. The member refers to the fact that there are chemicals going into the atmosphere, but the recent NASA report seems to say that the cause of this ozone depletion would be relative to the recent eruption of Mount Pinatubo, which is a natural cause.

To put things in perspective, it is important to point out that it is not only man-made chemicals that we are talking about here; it is a natural cause. We are talking about a potential 30 per cent to 40 per cent reduction in the ozone layer. Our scientists, who are world-class, by the way, seem to think that it may be in the area of 15 per cent.

All of that being said, we take this problem very seriously. We have always, always taken this problem very seriously. I will examine the issue with the provinces of whether it is not necessary to regulate and, if we come to the conclusion that is what we need, that is what we will do.

### Oral Questions

#### THE CONSTITUTION

**Ms. Ethel Blondin (Western Arctic):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister in the absence of the Minister responsible for Constitutional Affairs.

The last constitutional conference on a renewed Canada will be held in Vancouver the weekend of February 14. I want to ask the Prime Minister how he can justify the conclusion of public debate on the Constitution without having a conference on aboriginal affairs, in light of the overwhelming interest and support of Canadians across this country.

**Hon. Jean J. Charest (Minister of the Environment):** Mr. Speaker, I am happy to answer on behalf of the Minister responsible for Constitutional Affairs.

I think the hon. member will acknowledge that almost all members in this House have taken very seriously the processes we have put forward. We have very actively sought to include as many people as possible in this process, including the aboriginal communities. In fact we put forward a proposal by which they could participate in some conferences, but I regret to report that only two of the aboriginal communities reported that they were favourable to that. In those circumstances we did not think it was appropriate to go forward.

That being the case, we are still ready to look at any mechanisms that will ensure aboriginal people, as all segments of Canadian society, have their say in this very important debate about the future of our country.

**Ms. Ethel Blondin (Western Arctic):** Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is for the same minister.

In previous conferences there were no provisions for aboriginal people. They in fact hijacked the process to get input. There was unanimous consent by the organizations to have a conference on aboriginal affairs.

Having said that, I have in my possession letters from the national organization leaders who would like to have designated the fifth and final conference as an aboriginal conference on aboriginal constitutional agenda.

Will the government reconsider its position and have that conference designated as an aboriginal conference, or will it deny the will of the public again?