

• (1210)

Although it will take many years to implement, this plan will provide a framework for initiatives that will help us change our decision-making.

Our environmental action plan will improve our decisions by providing for better scientific knowledge, and training, more reliable data, better communications and more widespread use of advanced technology to monitor and report on the state of the environment.

[English]

Our plan will emphasize the importance of maintaining partnerships and establishing new ones among all elements of society—governments, industry, labour, non-governmental agencies, citizen groups and individual Canadians.

The federal government is taking responsibility for implementing the environmental action plan. Because the market-place cannot by itself establish the proper framework for responsible decisions on environment issues, governments at all levels must establish roles governing activities that affect the environment. We must establish the value of the environment through regulations, laws, and through economic and financial penalties and rewards.

As I have suggested, selective environmentally-oriented tax measures can have a place in our tax system in cases where this is the most effective means of achieving specific goals. However, as I said at the start, a modern, efficient tax system cannot be designed to achieve one single desirable goal, no matter how desirable. We must have a fundamentally sound, fair and efficient tax system before considering the use of the tax system to pursue so profound and wide-reaching objective.

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, I may recall and repeat that this government has made a commitment to take all necessary steps to protect and preserve our environment.

We encourage policies that are ecologically sound. We do not oppose them. In fact, considering the complexity and extent of the pollution problem in Canada, we must seek new and imaginative solutions.

*Supply*

[English]

However, the opposition motion ignores the wider range of considerations that a responsible government must take into account. Canada must first have in place a stable, reliable tax system that will ensure our economy and fiscal health. Only when such a tax system is fully in place can we be sure we will have both the means and the ability to achieve the goal this motion seeks.

[Translation]

That, in a few words, is what this government is doing, Mr. Speaker, and for the reasons just mentioned, I believe the House should reject this motion.

[English]

**Mr. Karygiannis:** Mr. Speaker, the environment is something that concerns not only the members in this House, not only the average Canadian, but every person around the globe. We must stop borrowing the land from our children. We must work very hard to protect the environment in the future.

In the Scarborough area very close to my riding there is a committee called Save the Rouge Committee, that is working very hard. It is an area where there is talk that an expressway will go through, where houses will be built. It is an area where children at the present time go for school trips to clean up the environment, and they feel happy about it. It is an area for wildlife and where metro residents can go to enjoy themselves.

However, I heard the hon. member across the way talk about tax reform, and about the GST being 9 per cent. Clearly I was just baffled. Has the member not listened to the people of Canada, 80 per cent of whom are saying that they are opposed to the 9 per cent GST? Yesterday, outside, we had thousands of people voicing their concern against the GST.

The member rambled on about how fair the taxation is that the government is implementing and how it is working to reduce the deficit. I am just wondering if the member is in a nightmarish state and he has to open his eyes and see exactly what the people of Canada want.

Yes, the people of Canada want a better environment. However, the people of Canada have repeatedly said, "No, no, no" to the 9 per cent GST.