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**OFFICIAL REPORT (HANSARD)**

**Monday, October 3, 2016**

Speaker: The Honourable Geoff Regan

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**Paris Agreement**

The House resumed consideration of the motion, and of the amendment and of the amendment to the amendment.

**Ms. Dianne L. Watts (South Surrey—White Rock, CPC):**

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House today to speak to the Paris climate change accord, which was signed by Canada in April of this year. This agreement confirms that the climate change targets set by the former Conservative government were the right ones for this country. It reaffirms and demonstrates that we are dedicated to the environment through innovation/regulation, sector by sector, clean energy dialogue with the United States, and looking at renewable fuels. The only difference is that we were innovative in our approach and cognizant of taxpayer dollars. We have heard a lot of rhetoric, which I have heard day after day, that we have done absolutely nothing for climate change. That could not be further from the truth.

We know that the targets that were set by the Conservatives were ambitious: a 30% reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 over 2005 levels. Obviously, the Liberal government agrees with this assertion as well, as it has adopted our targets in the Paris agreement. These targets reflect Canada's willingness to do its part in addressing the reduction of global greenhouse gas emissions. That is why we, the Conservative opposition, are in support of the first part of today's motion, which states:

That the House support the government's decision to ratify the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change signed by Canada in New York on April 22, 2016....

However, the second part of this motion is where further work needs to be done. It states: ...and that the House support the March 3, 2016, Vancouver Declaration calling on the federal government, the provinces, and territories to work together to develop a Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change.

That was something that was promised by the Liberal government within 90 days. We have not seen that, so we will move on.

There is no doubt that climate change is a priority for Canadians. However, I have always said, and will continue to say, that the actions on climate change will happen on the ground, on the front line. The real change will absolutely be made by our communities in our cities. In fact, the work is already happening now and has been under way for many years. That is where we need to put our focus and our support.

As a former mayor, and like many former mayors who sit in this House, I can say first hand that municipalities know what needs to be done, and the mechanisms are already in place for the most part. There are provincial targets that cities have signed onto and agreed to. There are federal targets that cities have signed onto and have agreed to through organizations like the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, which is already doing great work with our municipalities to ensure they have the tools to assist in the reduction of greenhouse gases and reduce our impact on climate change. In fact, over 90% of the municipalities surveyed by the FCM have already developed or are developing greenhouse gas reduction plans and climate mitigation plans.

In my own city of Surrey, we have completed a number of projects, and we still have a good number under way. As the former mayor, I can say we built an organics biofuel facility, which diverted 70% of waste from the landfill and used the renewable fuel to power our fleet. This was the first closed-loop system in North America. We have also implemented a geothermal system. We have used hydrogen fuel cells, electric cars, and CNG buses. We have LED lights throughout the city. We have always looked for opportunities to reduce our footprint and reduce greenhouse gases, especially when we implemented our sustainability charter in conjunction with many other cities back in 2007.

Many projects helped reduce emissions and protect the environment, and it was entirely driven by the cities. Our green city initiatives spoke about protection of our ecosystems and the preservation of natural living heritage and green infrastructure, and we secured 5,700 acres of land and planted more than 10,000 trees.

However, there is more to do and more issues to deal with when we talk about changing weather patterns and the rise of water levels by two metres. This is particularly relevant when there is farmland in the flood plains and when cities are building houses on the flood plains. It is my belief that, when we talk about sustainable development, along with infrastructure and transportation, it is the overall system we should be looking at.

Communities and provinces are where greenhouse gas reductions are going to take place. In fact, some would argue that sometimes federal intervention can be potentially harmful to the work that is already being done. For example, a private member's motion that was passed last week by the Liberal government in the House will impose greenhouse gas emission screens on infrastructure projects in our communities, which will then prioritize infrastructure funding toward projects that mitigate climate change.

This is all good and all lofty. However, many communities need new roads, new bridges, and better highways. They need these critical pieces of infrastructure that are, unfortunately, going to emit greenhouse gases as they are built, but that does not mean that communities do not have climate change mitigation plans in place. There needs to be a holistic approach of having the ability to look at the entire picture, not just one piece of infrastructure.

The federal government needs to be supporting the work that has been done and the new initiatives and plans that are already in place and being developed. Some of these plans have been in place for decades. We do not need to duplicate the work or add more carbon taxes, especially when Canadians are already paying provincial carbon taxes.

The Paris agreement commits countries like Canada to do their part in reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and with this I have absolutely no issue. To have the federal government impose a national carbon tax on all provinces and territories is not working together. The premiers of Saskatchewan and Nova Scotia and the three territorial premiers have all stated their opposition to the imposition of the federal carbon tax in the area of shared jurisdiction. They all dispute the Prime Minister's interpretation of the Vancouver declaration as an excuse for the federal government to impose a carbon tax in their respective provinces and territories.

It is my belief that we need to support communities that already have well-established and effective greenhouse gas reduction plans and climate change mitigation plans in place. We also need to help and support those communities that struggle with these issues to develop more robust plans. That is exactly why my colleague, the member for Abbotsford, introduced the amendment this morning and called on the federal government to work with provinces and territories to develop a reasonable plan to combat climate change that does not encroach on provincial or territorial jurisdiction or increase the overall tax burden on Canadians. Otherwise, we would be duplicating work, potentially encroaching on the rights of provinces; and frankly, we have enough work to do on our own.

Again, the FCM and every provincial organization that deals with cities and municipalities already have that framework in place. In B.C., the UBCM, which just met last week, has also set targets for greenhouse gas and climate change targets for cities. It is important to acknowledge all of the existing work that has been done over the years and look at how we can take the existing system and make it more robust.

**Mr. Jonathan Wilkinson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.):**

Mr. Speaker, the hon. member says that the previous government had a credible climate plan.

I spent the last 20 years as an executive in the clean tech industry. I have to tell members that there is nobody in the clean tech or clean energy sectors who would agree with that characterization.

If she truly believes that, how can she explain the fact that if we take everything done up until the end of 2015, from a regulatory perspective and from a carbon pricing perspective, and we forecast forward as to where we will be in 2030, we find we will be 10% above the 2005 level in 2030, and the Conservative target was 30% below?

**Ms. Dianne L. Watts:**

Mr. Speaker, I guess my question would be why they adopted our plan if it is, frankly, not something that the member would appreciate or support.

I am going to say this. We worked on the international climate change adaptation with the World Bank. We did a number of things, actually: established 19 new clean-tech projects under the Asia-Pacific Partnership on Clean Development and Climate; invested heavily in carbon capture technology; protected a record amount of parkland; made historical investments in wetland and boreal forest restoration; established a clean air regulatory agenda; introduced regulations for cars and heavy-duty trucks; worked with the U.S. on vehicle emissions, sulphur and gasoline; began to work on any number of fronts; provided supports on the development of carbon capture technology; removed tax breaks for oil sands producers.

The biofuel facility and the renewable energy was, frankly, work that I did as the former mayor, with the Conservative government.

**Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP):**

Mr. Speaker, yes, the Conservatives had a plan of sorts and made a lot of promises over the 10-year period. One of those promises, as I mentioned earlier in this place today, was that they would issue regulations to govern the greenhouse gases from the fossil fuel industry. Those were first promised, I recall, by Mr. Prentice, who was the environment minister. Those never came forward.

Other measures that their government could have taken would have been to fast-track the phase-out of coal-fired power. They could have mirrored the measures taken by the premier of Alberta because of the clear evidence provided by the Canadian Medical Association of the serious health and environmental impacts of coal-fired power.

I wonder if the member would respond as to why her government did not take serious measures while it was in power, to actually begin reducing greenhouse gases in a more rapid way?

**Ms. Dianne L. Watts:**

Mr. Speaker, I would say that there were a number of things done. We introduced new regulations to reduce emissions from the coal-fired electricity generation, working to phase that out, as I have heard.

I think there is a lot that can be done, I think there is a lot that is being done, and I think there is an opportunity, on all sides of the House, to do what we need to do to protect the environment.

The point here is to do it right. The point is not to pass costs onto Canadians and implement tax after tax. There are other ways to do. There are regulatory ways to do it. There are incentivizing ways to do it. There is the technology that can be developed, and we should keep that technology here. I was speaking on the plane to a fellow from Alberta who is going to Brazil to work with biomass. All of that technology leaves the country.

We have to switch it around and ask how we can keep that brain trust here and export our technology to places like China, India, and all of the countries where the carbon emissions are off the chart.

That is where we would have the jobs. We would keep them here in Canada, not export them.