We are starting to see some of the Conservative government's approach to forestry, and there are some concerns. I noted a recent article in the *Financial Post* hinting at a market-driven approach; that the Minister of Finance will be bringing in new policies in the new year regarding the government's approach to the environment and the economy. But I am concerned over some of the comments around that area when one particular group suggests that the answer is to privatize our forests. I suggest that is not the approach to take. The approach to take is to ensure that legislators, members of Parliament, MLAs and MPPs ensure that when they represent their area, their government, they represent the interests of our forests.

The minister talked about wasted years. Perhaps it is when we talk about the Liberal record we see the wasted years,the wasted time of the Conservatives since they promised an immediate department and the wasted time under the Liberals. In that same election in 1984, the current leader of the Liberal Party came to the home town of the minister and I, saying that there was no need for a full department of forestry. We in this country have grown accustomed to the Liberals shifting their positions from time to time. In this case, in the sense that they are supporting this bill, we are pleased that they have had a shift in opinion and are joining our party in supporting this bill, I trust we will see further amendments to strengthen the department in the committee.

I want to touch on some of the proposals and ideas that our party and I have that I will be bringing before the committee. I am pleased to, on an historical note, point out my own personal involvement in this. At the 1983 federal New Democratic Party convention in Saskatchewan, I presented a resolution from my riding, which passed unanimously at that convention, for a full department of forests. I am pleased that now in 1989 we are debating that bill. We are not pleased at the time that it took for the government to bring in this legislation.

At the 1985 convention, we reaffirmed our commitment to a full department and promised to provide an active forest industry and department in the last election campaign. We will be presenting some amendments to strengthen the mandate of this department. I think it needs strengthening to give that voice for forestry that we have all talked about. I propose to add to the annual report provisions of this bill. I think we must lay out in the legislation some of the concerns and issues that must be dealt with on an annual basis in a report to Parliament.

We will also be moving amendments in co-operation with my colleague, the Member for Skeena, our party's environment critic, relating specifically to sustainable development as it relates to the forest industry.

We will also be moving amendments that enhance the role of the federal government in co-operation with the provinces and the forest resource development agreements. I will be making some comments on that later.

I also propose legislating an annual forest minister's conference and a First Ministers' conference on forestry every five years. I think for the number one industry, the number one environmental issue in this country, we must ensure that our First Ministers, the Prime Minister and the Premiers, meet on this and are aware of the critical concern this particular resource area has to our country.

We will also be proposing amendments for the establishment of a forest trade commissioner. The concerns that we have had in British Columbia and other parts of this country in terms of the Conservative government's sell-out to the Americans on the softwood lumber tariff means we feel that there must be a more ongoing presence in forestry in the trade area. In light of the fact that forest trade in Canada brings in such revenues to this country, it is our view that it requires a permanent official to follow along in that process; and we will be providing amendments to that effect.

As well, in discussions with some of the witnesses that we hope will appear, we will move provisions to create more employment. That was commented on by previous speakers. We can do better. We intend to bring amendments to the legislation to see that that happens. These and others, we hope, will help strengthen the mandate of this department.

We have also called for this committee in dealing with such a critical issue to have the opportunity to travel through the country and hear Canadians' views on forestry. I have on a number of occasions advised the chairman of the Standing Committee on Forestry and Fisheries of that. Within the last two weeks I have written to Canadians, groups, individuals, unions, industry and environmental groups inviting them to make submissions to the committee so we can discuss these issues. I suggest if there is not a willingness on behalf of the Conservatives to have this committee travel, I sense an obligation on the part of our party to travel across this country to hear the views of Canadians on forestry. We have to be realistic in that this is likely the last significant