

Government Orders

various jurisdictions to follow through in having a complete blueprint, as is being urged by the endangered species campaign. It is incredibly important.

I want to read into the record the words of His Royal Highness Prince Phillip, who wrote the forward to this campaign, who is the honorary international president of the World Wildlife Fund. He wrote this with respect to this campaign and this country:

Canada has an almost unique opportunity to ensure that future generations will be able to see examples of the state their land was in before the rush for development and exploitation began. The task is to conserve a whole range of viable ecosystems and habitats, covering all the country's natural regions. It is also necessary to ensure that those human activities that impinge directly on the natural environment, such as forestry, farming and commercial fishing, adopt sound conservation practices.

That statement by His Royal Highness, again clearly states the challenge that faces us all. We are not operating in some kind of isolation. We are not in some kind of an ivory tower. We must work with others. We must, in the first instance, work with the provinces.

I am frankly amazed that we have not heard either from the NDP or the official opposition a clear acknowledgement that the provinces must be directly and helpfully involved.

- (1610)

The hon. member for Davenport made the remark in his statement that this government had completed projects initiated by his Liberal friends. Why was that? One reason was because we changed the approach. We were prepared to work with and not simply to move in unilaterally and get the kind of mix-up in delays and dilemmas that Kouchibouguac in New Brunswick resulted in and several others.

We want to see a realization of this plan and the minister, I think very realistically and methodically, laid out the five initial parks that he hopes can be a part of that package. I would say quite frankly that I hope that that is a minimum and not a maximum objective. If we are going to reach by the end of this decade those 39 zones and those 18 new parks, that strikes me more like two a year than one a year. To that extent, I would certainly support the hon. member for Skeena in seeing if we can reach that stage.

I want to say quite directly and simply that unless we acknowledge the realities of putting the park system together, knowing what we are doing, working with our

closest partners, working with the major economic and social sectors across the country, we will achieve nothing. I hope that members on all sides of the House realize the importance of that.

I simply want to say in conclusion that the government is not in a position to move unilaterally to set aside 12 per cent of any province's lands and waters for wilderness protection or for national park purposes. The protection of wilderness is not solely a federal responsibility but one that must of necessity be shared with provincial governments and other jurisdictions.

It is hoped that by striving to complete the national park system within a reasonable time frame, such as by the year 2000, the federal government will encourage the provinces and territories to give similar priority to the completion of their respective systems of provincial and territorial parks, ecological reserves, wildlife areas and other categories of protected areas that they administer.

In my view, the completion of each jurisdiction's system of protected areas following the systematic approach that has long been advocated by the international union for the conservation of nature will contribute far more to the protection of this country's environment than simply the setting aside of some arbitrary figure, whether it is 12 per cent or any other and will achieve in the end the very results that the hon. member for Skeena and I believe all members of this House hope to achieve.

Mr. Fulton: Madam Speaker, I am glad that the hon. member for Rosedale has moved away from the rather spurious argument that has been going on for a good chunk of the day about some kind of threat to the government. Frankly, I have been a great supporter of the Minister of the Environment until today. The speech he gave in this House related to the completion of the national parks system and the reasons upon which he did not want to consider the 12 per cent target were absolutely without foundation. I think the minister will have to deal with me and many members of this House on different grounds from this point on.

I would like to ask the member to respond because he raised a number of arguments that I think need to be fleshed out somewhat. In the document provided by the Canadian Arctic Resources Committee and others, which I referred to earlier today, to the minister when he took office a year ago, one of the points that is made is