

Treatment of Animals

losing the fight for survival. By the year 2,000, conservationists foresee a world whose polluted continents and oceans are the almost exclusive domain of men, livestock and rats... In the name of sport, profit and progress, 550 species of mammals, birds, and reptiles have been pushed to the brink of extinction within the last century. And more names are being added to the list every year.

In the United States alone, 50 native American species have been wiped out in a period of 50 years.

On my desk and in my office on the sixth floor, I have the reports and the records regarding what is happening to our wildlife in Canada, how species after species are facing extinction unless we do something about it. It was difficult enough for wildlife to maintain its existence before the intensified inroads of pollution and the intensification of the activities of sportsmen. But now, in the last three years, we have seen so-called sportsmen using planes and helicopters to locate the animals which are hard to find. We find them locating them, running them down, landing, and shooting. I hope that every member saw that picture of the polar bear a few days ago, the first to be shot under the new regulations in the Northwest Territories. A Canadian sportsman from Winnipeg shot this bear after it was spotted from a plane. We know that according to conservationists there are not more than 12,000 polar bears left in the world. We see them being located by planes and run down by snowmobiles. Let hon. members speak to some of our federal civil servants as I have, and they will find out that this is done not only to wolves but to deer, moose and elk which are being run to death by snowmobiles. I have never shot an animal in my life but I have no objection to hunting and fishing as true sportsmanship.

However, I believe it is time that we paid attention to the conservation of our wildlife. Otherwise our grizzly bears, our polar bears, our Rocky Mountain big horn sheep, plus, I believe, another 41 species, will disappear. Eighteen months ago the United States passed legislation on a federal basis on this matter. Surely, this year we can at least make a start by referring this entire matter to a standing committee of the House and asking them to look into the situation and to call in expert witnesses, interested persons and organizations. Then, as a result of their accumulated wisdom, the committee could report to the House on a matter which should certainly affect us in mind and in heart.

If I have not said enough to convince hon. members, I hope they will read publications

[Mr. Winch.]

such as "The Wildlife Review" and "Viewpoint" put out by the Canadian Association for Humane Trapping, and the publications of the Animal Defence League of Canada. I hope they will read and understand and accept in principle the various matters which I have named in my resolution. This being the third time this resolution has been before the House, I hope it will be accepted and not talked out.

• (5:20 p.m.)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Guy LeBlanc (Rimouski): Mr. Speaker, I have listened with much interest to the speech that the mover of the motion has just delivered. Not only did he speak with great eloquence, but also with great knowledge. I have much respect for his experience. I know that he has been sitting in this House for a number of years and that he has been a political figure for quite a long time. In spite of all that, I take the liberty of disagreeing with his opinion.

I approve the principle of his motion for several reasons. But, in practice, I think I must not support that motion, especially in view of what has been done and of what is being done now in this connection. The future seems to me still brighter than the past and the present time.

I am against that motion because, taking into account our set of values, I think that in Canada we are faced with problems to which it is more urgent to find solutions, and I shall quote some examples.

However, I can advise the government to continue to implement and to improve its policy, as it has done up to now, especially with regard to conservation.

Although the four points of this motion are important, I think that the most important is the fourth one which deals with wildlife conservation. It is even essential. This discussion is useful; it represents one of the many efforts which should be undertaken to protect animals.

In principle we are all in favour of this motion. But we can support it only in principle. Naturally, common sense requires it. In fact, according to natural law and simple common sense, we know that it is wrong to destroy animal or plant life because any form of life on earth is useful to man. It is there I think that the notion of respect for a scale of values comes in.