

*Government Orders*

that conference and she had the privilege of announcing to the 650 delegates representing 88 countries and over 100 non-governmental organizations that Environment Canada was developing new legislation to control international trade in and interprovincial transport of foreign and Canadian wild species.

The Wild Animal and Plant Protection Act, which we refer to as WAPPA, is that new federal legislation. It will regulate international and interprovincial trade in wild animals and plants, including their parts and products. Its objectives are to protect Canada's wild animal and plant species from illegal trade, to help protect wild animal and plant species in foreign countries from poaching and smuggling and to protect Canada's ecosystems from the introduction of designated harmful species, the so-called biological pollutants.

The importance of the issues addressed by Bill C-42 should not be underestimated. In a February 1991 submission to the Minister of the Environment, the coalition of leading wildlife and nature organizations, known as the Group of Eight, identified 10 priority issues for biodiversity and sustainable development in Canada. One of these is improved federal wildlife legislation concerning poaching and illegal trade in wildlife and effective enforcement of such legislation.

Bill C-42 will complement existing provincial and territorial legislation governing the conservation of wild animals and plants. As well, it will allow Canada to better comply with international agreements and support the efforts of other countries to conserve and protect species, especially endangered ones.

• (1120)

As I shall explain later in these remarks, unless this legislation is passed, the federal government will have limited capability to stop trade related illegal exploitation of wildlife, whether this wildlife is the falcon in Canada, or the rhinoceros in Africa.

Therefore, it is especially gratifying to be able to begin debate as that legislation, Bill C-42, moves to second reading today.

Before getting into the specifics of the legislation before the House, I would like to discuss the context within which Bill C-42 was developed. On December 11, 1990 the Government of Canada set out a comprehen-

sive policy and action plan to implement sustainable development in Canada. As members know, that was Canada's Green Plan for a Healthy Environment whose objective is "to secure for current and future generations of Canadians a safe and healthy environment and a sound a prosperous economy". To meet this challenge the green plan set out specific goals and targets and schedules for attaining them.

As part of its program to conserve and protect Canada's special spaces and species, the plan proposed introduction during 1991 of new legislation to deter poaching and illegal trading of wild animals and plants. The government is dedicated to fulfilling its green plan commitments and Bill C-42 received first reading in the House of Commons on November 7, 1991.

This bill is an important green plan initiative and embodies many of the principles of that plan. Poachers, smugglers and traffickers in wild species have no respect for nature and respect for nature is a fundamental tenet of the green plan. The plan emphasizes a strong relationship between a healthy environment and a healthy economy. Illegal trade in wild species undermines that relationship. The green plan stresses co-ordinated action by the federal government. All federal agencies concerned with trade in wild animals and plants will respond under Bill C-42.

Furthermore, implementation of this legislation will also reflect the shared responsibility of the federal and provincial governments with regard to wild species. The strengthening of these partnerships is also an important tenet of the green plan and the Wild Animal and Plant Protection Act will have the added benefit of ensuring the efficient use of public resources. Equally important, the legislation will provide a framework within which all affected and interested parties can work together to develop a program which attacks poaching and illegal trading in wildlife effectively. The Wild Animal and Plant Protection Act will indeed be a partnership for change.

Any co-ordinated and comprehensive approach aimed at fostering a healthy environment must take into account the protection of wildlife. That is why Canada's green plan called for the national wildlife strategy which was announced on November 29, 1991. Bill C-42 is an important component of that strategy.