

*Private Members' Business*

If crown land is leased to a private rancher, which I assume occurs in some parts of Canada, does that mean the control of the land is under the jurisdiction of the crown or the lessee? When I mentioned the slippery slope, this is exactly what I was referring to.

Perhaps the sponsor of the bill, the member for Davenport, might provide me with further clarification of this section and I would appreciate it.

Clause 3(2) of the bill states:

For greater certainty, nothing in this act shall be construed so as to abrogate or derogate from any existing aboriginal or treaty rights of the aboriginal peoples of Canada under section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982.

Endangered species legislation should apply equally to all Canadian citizens. There can be only one set of laws applied equally to everyone in Canada. If the government is serious about the protection of species it cannot predetermine which federal land will be part of this jurisdiction and which will not; it is either all or nothing.

Furthermore the Minister of the Environment has stated all Canadians share responsibility for ensuring that species are not lost to extinction as a result of human activities. I hope the minister when drafting her legislation will make certain that all Canadians will really mean all Canadians.

On August 17, 1995 the Minister of the Environment introduced a legislative proposal dealing with endangered species. It was called the Canadian Endangered Species Protection Act. Its intent was for consultation purposes with a hope that legislation would be introduced in the late fall. As of now Canada does not have any legislation dealing with endangered species. I was recently told that even the minister did not know that such legislation was absent in Canada.

This causes me and some of my constituents great concern, not the minister's lack of knowledge of her own portfolio but rather that she will now try to bring in legislation as quickly as possible in order to make a mark for herself. A responsible government would not do such a thing and therefore I ask the environment minister to make sure she not only has the environmental activists on her side but the industrial and agricultural communities as well.

It is extremely important to find common ground between all interested parties. Decisions on endangered species legislation should not be made hastily.

The Western Stock Growers Association has outlined five goals that go a long way in protecting endangered species without unnecessary intrusive government legislation. I bring these to the attention of the House.

First, land goals: They should be to maintain productive capacity for producing food and feed through sustainable development; management of habitat for both domestic livestock and wildlife; control access to such lands to limit disturbance to all species; empower the land holder to make appropriate management decisions.

Second, people goals: Allow local stakeholders a voice in the process; maintain the necessities of life and maintain the quality of life, particularly life in rural Canada.

Third, financial goals: Determine all of the direct and indirect costs of protection; determine all of the economic impacts and all benefits; preparation of a comprehensive budget to show how and by whom the action plan will be paid.

Fourth, government goals: Create a regulatory environment that facilitates flexible responses to endangered species management and avoids coercion of land holders; provide integration of funding of the foregoing processes; facilitate management by land holders.

I commend the member for Davenport on his bill. He has been a member in the House for some time and has been a champion for environmental causes. For this he should be applauded.

Should the bill make it to the Standing Committee on the Environment and Sustainable Development I hope the member for Davenport, the chair of the committee, will seek witnesses from all interested parties. I hope he will allow individual ranchers and farmers to appear so that the committee will hear from those who would be directly affected by his legislation.

I could spend a bit of time talking about some of the hoops American landowners have been put through by the endangered species legislation in the United States but I do not have time. I hope the member for Davenport and, more important, the Minister of the Environment become familiar with these issues.

Saskatchewan on two occasions, first under a New Democratic government and second under a Conservative government, attempted to introduce endangered species legislation without properly consulting all the stakeholders involved, particularly the landowners.

Landowners are certainly conservationists. They are environmentalists. They have the best interests of the land they are stewards of and the species that live on that land at heart. Coming from an area on the South Saskatchewan River, the river valley, it has been a joy to watch species flourish and live in harmony with nature and with the people who are the stewards of the land both for cultivation and for grazing of livestock.

There can be a co-operative approach to protecting endangered species and not limiting the rights of landowners and the lessees of crown land.