

In this government, we do not even know how much we spend on vehicles every year, how much we spend on gasoline, how much we spend on electricity, how much we spend on heating our buildings, how much we spend to have garbage carted away, and how much unnecessary money we spend on paper. We have no system of accounting for those things.

The Green Plan consultations talked about the importance of investing in technology. What better way than for the government, as the largest corporation in the country, to start looking at its own operations, getting its own house in order, looking at what technologies it needs to do that, and then being in the forefront of developing those technologies? Just as a customer for new products, the government has the opportunity to influence the marketplace in a positive way rather than imposing requirements and to ensure that the kinds of products and services that are developed will not only make government but the private sector more environmentally friendly.

Many companies want to be environmentally friendly, but especially the small ones need the tools to do it. Environmental audit in government can help those tools be developed.

I want to talk about environmental audit as a major international opportunity for Canada. As I said, in 1986 the government of New Zealand was the first, and is still the only country in the world, to establish environmental audit in its parliament. I want to quote again from *Eco Source* where it says:

No government standards exist anywhere in the world for environmental audit.

It also says there are real commercial advantages in turning out a better than average environmental performance. Finally, it says that "the implications of a full-blown greening commitment on the part of a major multinational or government agency would be impressive, primarily for its ripple effect".

We have in Canada some of the best raw talent to develop the methodologies and techniques of environmental audit anywhere in the world. When New Zealand set up its audit function, it did so with the help of Canadian officials. We need to put that talent to work, develop skills and knowledge that will give us a major product to market internationally, to help other coun-

tries and private sector operations become as environmentally friendly as they can.

That is why I say to get into environmental audit is a major business opportunity for Canada.

I want to conclude by saying that we have been trying to tell households, individuals and companies how to be more environmentally friendly, how to cut down their use of energy, how to cut down their production of garbage. Now we are looking at regulations, legislation and green taxes. Why not lead by example?

In the 1970s we were forced into energy conservation, and now again in the 1990s the Minister of Energy is telling Canadians to cut back on the use of energy. What have we done in government to demonstrate how that can be done? The major need now is to do it in business, in industrial operations, not in households.

Certainly the idea of an environmental auditor as such needs more exploration. There are many options as to how environmental audit can be started and carried on. The establishment of a specific position may or may not be the best way to do it. But until we take the first step along the road to ensuring that every government department has the skills, the tools, the knowledge and the necessity to monitor its environmental impacts, we will not get anywhere. We will never decide how best to do it. We will never develop those tools of knowledge that our companies, our private sector, and the public sector at all levels of government need.

Next week the green plan will be tabled. I hope it will not ignore the advice it got from over \$6 million worth of consultation. I will only point out that for less than half that amount, the office of an environmental auditor general could have been established.

I hope the government will include environmental audit in its Green Plan to be tabled next week. I would hope that if it intends to do so, it will make a point of allowing this motion to go to committee. All that needs to happen for this motion to receive further discussion and for us to start along that long road to being environmentally responsible as a government, as a Parliament, as a nation, is for government members not to continue talking until six o'clock.

• (1720)

If this debate ends before six o'clock, this motion can then be examined and acted on by a committee. We will have taken one important step down the road.