

urgency of this issue and to allow a special debate in our Chambers. I want to emphasize that the matter is considered a very important issue by all three political Parties here.

It is strange, as colleagues in the House and men and women have mentioned, that for centuries the aboriginal people in Canada have lived in harmony with the land, with the waters, and with the animal inhabitants. That is something everyone can recognize. People have developed a skill and an understanding that such harmony must be respected. It is a measure of success. In cultures it is a measure of obtaining adulthood. The respect for the elements are the elements of nature. Those elements are not strange. They are the fellow creatures, the sources of food, clothing and tools. It is fundamental and is a characteristic of culture and of lifestyle.

Those of us in Canada who come from the northern and western parts understand the harsh climate and the soil conditions of our land. Our land is not warm. It is not hospitable. There have to be options for survival, and the options have to be there for the scattered native people of Canada as well. For many isolated communities, as other Members have mentioned, particularly in northern Canada—and I do not refer only to north of 60°; farther south there are isolated communities—there are limited employment opportunities. This is a means of earning an income.

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The Inuit in the eastern Arctic are particularly dependent upon wildlife for food and clothing because of costs, because of tradition, and because of the area in which they have lived for millennia, an area which they understand much better than I and much better than most Members of the Chamber.

This is not just a political issue. I would like to refer to the words of the Right Reverend John R. Sperry, Bishop of the Arctic, in a letter which he sent to the British House of Commons on March 9, 1988. Bishop Sperry says that in northern Canada, without agriculture, forestry, animal husbandry, factories, and all the avenues of employment traditionally evident in Britain, our native people are themselves trapped, caught in an era of cultural erosion, beset by social upheavals of every description, and experience a perplexing unknown that they have not known in their entire history. To rob them of what little is left of their traditional way of life is an act of unwarranted cruelty. I hope that Members of the House of Commons and House of Lords in Great Britain had an opportunity to read that letter from the Right Reverend John R. Sperry.

There are some 50,000 aboriginal trappers in Canada. Fur harvesting through trapping enables them to carry on their traditional lifestyle, the lifestyle of living off the land. It is a necessary supplement to income, and it also provides food for their families.

Trapping offers the native people of Canada an opportunity to maintain their spiritual and cultural relationship, that relationship with the land and with the resources of the land.

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What we fear most is the removal of that relationship by action that we hope does not take place. It has certainly come very close to taking place. It was supposedly entered by mistake and withdrawn, but it could take place in the House of Commons in Great Britain.

Other Members have mentioned that we in Canada find it very strange that fortunes were made in Great Britain by the very industry that some politician is now seeking to destroy. This politician feels that this action is cost-free. It is a way of getting re-elected without cost, taking on an industry and a people in Canada in a way which he feels will not cause him any harm in his political career in Great Britain.

Those involved in the anti-fur campaign feel that they can destroy this largely traditional lifestyle, again without paying any cost. I find it to be a real irony that the animal rights advocates who are primarily urban dwellers would destroy an aboriginal way of life based on respect for wildlife and for a harmonious co-existence with the natural world, a way of life which has already been lost to city dwellers. They wish it to be lost to the people of Canada who rely on this industry.

It is not an even game. The cards are stacked against the Canadian fur trappers. The urban based anti-fur lobby, the anti-trapping lobby, and animal rights groups are highly organized, well financed, and extremely adept at emotionally loaded advertising techniques. In any other kind of public persuasion, the advertising that has been put forward by the anti-fur campaign in Great Britain would be classified as—I will not say immoral, but it certainly would be classified as—and I will not say immoral—being sensational to the extreme and not putting forward a balanced point of view. It preys upon emotions of people who have no way of recognizing the change that could take place or any alternative that could be put forward. Actually, it is a cheap shot at people who are not able to put forward their own arguments and information to the British public.

I think it must be recognized that the aboriginal people and those involved in the trapping industry in Canada are not lacking in sophistication. They know about Boot's Drug Stores, Cadbury chocolates, and Marks & Spencer. They are willing to identify those outlets of British goods in Canada, and they will ask other Canadians to join them in fighting back if necessary. They have also asked to have identified those industries that would be particularly apparent in Mr. Clark's riding. That, I think, shows that they are serious about their lifestyle. They are not lacking in sophistication. They are willing to take on a powerful politician who wishes to use the people in the trapping and fur industry of Canada to gain his re-election without any concern for the cost or consequence to the aboriginal people and trappers of Canada.

The circumstances in which the trappers of Canada now find themselves were paralleled by that in which the Canadian sealers found themselves. It is against our rules to hold up evidence, but I was proud when I was first made a Minister of the Crown to be presented with a sealskin briefcase