

Private Members' Business

or outside Canada, which hopefully would mean that disasters such as the *Exxon Valdez* might be prevented in future.

In clause 7(1) the minister may formulate plans for the conservation, development and use of resources specified in that section and for related research. The word related has been added and it adds a world of meaning to that clause.

I mentioned the woodland improvement act. Our forest resources need protection, development and sustainable development if we are to continue to be a world leader in these things.

With respect to a carbon tax I have a few comments. If we adopt green accounting in the resource industries, it might serve the same purpose. It might put in the hands of the captains of industry the kind of techniques, the kind of information that they need in order to make the kind of decisions that will continue to sustain us in the fields of forestry and mining.

Mr. George S. Rideout (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Natural Resources): Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the member for Oxford on his speech and the points that he raised in his rather brief address. I realize he was trying to give other hon. members an opportunity to speak.

I would like to ask him a couple of questions. First, what is his opinion of the inclusion of a definition of sustainable development in the legislation? Second, maybe he could confirm the rather strong position taken by the Prime Minister with respect to a carbon tax.

Mr. Finlay: Mr. Speaker, I am delighted that the definition of sustainable development is in the bill. It would be very short-sighted at this juncture not to include that definition in the bill.

If we do not move wholeheartedly in that direction, and I mean at this level of government as well as provincially and municipally, we are going to be in a bad way.

I must apologize, I did not catch the hon. member's second question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): It being 5.50 p.m. the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

• (1750)

[English]

CANADA ELECTIONS ACT

Mr. Sarkis Assadourian (Don Valley North) moved that Bill C-229, an act to amend the Canada Elections Act (registration

of political parties), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Mr. Speaker, first I wish to thank the House for allowing me this opportunity to speak on Bill C-229. I also want to say that I am a bit disappointed that this bill will only have one hour of debate and will not have a chance to be voted on. However, that is how the system works and that is what we have to live with.

Before I speak about the changes I want to apply with Bill C-229, I want to briefly describe to members of the House the present situation existing in the Canada Elections Act.

The law reads that if 50 candidates are nominated in any region of the country they qualify as a national party. That is a very narrow definition of the law. It has to increase in order for democracy to work.

The changes I would like applied to the act are the following: first, to be a national party, that party should be running candidates in seven provinces at least. Second, representation should be from 50 per cent of the population of Canada. Third, 50 per cent of the candidates should be from each of the seven provinces in order to qualify as a national party.

In last October's election we had 15 political parties running for office. At the top of the list were the two national parties, the Conservatives and the Liberals who had 295 candidates nominated, next were the NDP, followed by the Natural Law Party of Canada which nominated 231 candidates, and the lowest party was the Marxist-Leninist Party which nominated 51 candidates.

Some people will argue that Bill C-229 restricts Canadians from practising their right to become a candidate or to form a political party. This is far from being true. In effect, what this bill does is it allows people in all regions of the country to participate in the change. For example let us take one of the principles of this bill. It states that the party must run 50 per cent of its candidates in seven provinces in accordance to population.

Today in the House we have an opposition party that ran 75 candidates in only one province. Out of the 75 candidates it won 54 seats and became the official opposition. By tradition the official opposition is the government in waiting and the leader of the official opposition is to be the Prime Minister in waiting. Can you imagine this country and this House which has a political party whose sole purpose is to break up this country and a Prime Minister in waiting whose sole purpose is to implement that break-up? That is not democracy.

I live in Ontario. I am the member for Don Valley North. People in Don Valley North never had a chance to vote on who the opposition is in this House. That is not democracy. We in Ontario have the right to decide, as much as the people in Quebec have the right to decide, who will be the opposition party. People in B.C. have the same right as do the people on the