

**Mr. Speaker:** As I indicated to the hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier and all members a moment ago, any time members want to rise on a matter of order in which they question or wish to consult with the Speaker, or make recommendations to the Speaker and through the Speaker to other members of the House, that is a perfectly normal practice here. I am not going to preclude that.

I also point out that the House has the power to change the standing orders and I refer specifically to Standing Order 76(5). Those standing orders give very strong powers of selection of motions to the Speaker. That is where the authority is given to me by all members of the House. If members want to change that, that is a matter for members to consider.

I thank the hon. member for his intervention.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski):** It being one o'clock, I do now leave the chair until two o'clock this day.

At 1 p.m. the House took recess.

#### AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 2 p.m.

### STATEMENTS PURSUANT TO S. O. 31

[English]

#### THE ENVIRONMENT

**Hon. Chas. L. Caccia (Davenport):** Mr. Speaker, the just released discussion paper, *The Green Plan*, is the first attempt of the Minister of the Environment to consult the public after failing to obtain approval for his environmental agenda, drafted in secrecy and rejected earlier this year.

The discussion paper ignores Tory budget cuts to environmental protection, research on alternative and renewable sources of energy, research on toxicology, wildlife, et cetera.

The paper lacks substance, lacks a sense of urgency, and lacks political will. It is the product of a cabinet constantly being dragged into the environment debate but not really committed to change.

#### S. O. 31

The paper raises yesterday's questions which set back the environmental agenda by several years. Because of all this, Canadians should come forward, ask the relevant questions and help formulate the difficult answers. Then it will be the minister's task to prove that this government wants to act on the protection of the environment and implementation of sustainable development.

Clearly it has been left to Canadians to define the real environmental agenda.

\* \* \*

#### MEECH LAKE ACCORD

**Mr. Bill Vankoughnet (Hastings—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington):** Mr. Speaker, the Meech Lake companion resolution is a laudable initiative.

The accord itself, even with its imperfections, may also deserve broader support, except for one item: the distinct society clause.

The distinct society clause or phrase is found in a clause without definition or parameters. We must conclude therefore that it may be interpreted in a variety of ways.

Canadians have expressed their concern about the ambiguous distinct society clause. A paragraph in the preamble establishing some parameters provided by the Supreme Court of Canada would address those concerns whether before or at an agreed extension to the June 23 deadline.

Most would agree that a whole Canada is in everyone's best interest. Flexibility, compromise and tolerance are parts of the Canadian way. I am confident that Canadians, as in the past, will rise above their problems for the good of all and for the good of this great country, Canada.

\* \* \*

#### LITHUANIA

**Mr. Bill Attewell (Markham—Whitchurch—Stouffville):** Mr. Speaker, representatives of the Lithuanian Parliament are visiting Moscow today. President Landsbergis acknowledges that the re-establishment of their independence presents constitutional problems for the Soviet Union.

Some people are of the view that Canada should not be putting pressure on Mikhail Gorbachev over the