

*Supply*

It states in its conclusion: "We feel, however, that the committee is paving the way for an organization that will only add to the jumble and confusion now prevalent in environmental matters".

The Bloc is concerned about a national Canadian government representing the second largest land mass on our globe having precedence over its smaller provincial jurisdiction. The danger is that smaller jurisdictions invariably lead to narrower approaches, never ending discussions and negotiations. This would ultimately lead to a compromise of independent nations that would do nothing but magnify the confusion which currently exists between the individual provinces and the Government of Canada on environmental issues.

The Reform Party supports the principle of sustainable environment which balances the need for a healthy environment with the continued progress and growth of Canada's economy. The Reform Party believes that environmental considerations must carry equal weight with the economic, social and technical considerations of any projects.

In the same report I have been referring to on the commissioner of the environment and sustainable development, page 25, Reform committee members expressed the concern that Canadian industry might in the short term be put at a competitive disadvantage if Canada adopts the principles of green accounting ahead of other countries.

When I refer to greening and green accounting, I am referring to new imaginative accounting practices and business practices that give specific dollar values to previously undefined environmental costs. These real costs appear on a business or a country's formal balance sheet. Premature independent greening of the Canadian system of national accounts could alter our gross national product and have the effect of discouraging domestic and foreign investors.

In order for Canadian business to remain internationally competitive, the Reform Party believes it would be advisable that Canada not get too far ahead of its major trading partners in issues like greening of national accounts or imposition of green or carbon taxes.

In the context of this speech today, this example relates to the potential fracturing of Canada with the separation of the province of Quebec. Obviously the separatist leader had the autonomy and control of Quebec as an objective. A separate political and economic jurisdiction that would be competing for international trade with what was left of Canada would open the very real possibility of competition at the lowest common denominator of environmental standards. Progressive concepts like green accounting would most likely be set aside due to the new competitive pressures.

If the Bloc Quebecois cannot even agree with other environment committee members to arrive at a consensus on an environmental report as benign as the establishment of the office of commissioner of environment and sustainable development, what does that tell us of the potential for co-operation between a sovereign country of Quebec and the rest of Canada?

The common element that joins all human beings is our environment. Fracturing the nation of Canada with man-made lines on a map can only serve to weaken our will, even our ability, to protect our ecologically balanced resources.

As a leading middle power in the world, we can lead the way. We have within the nation of Canada a large critical mass that can bring responsible environmental practices to a new high standard. The fragmentation of Canada will dilute our ability to impact the world. Our globe is desperate for leadership in the development and establishment of responsible environmental practices that ignore political boundaries.

We must not build political walls. We must break them down for our environment, for our children, for our future.

• (1315)

**Mr. Dennis J. Mills (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Industry):** Madam Speaker, I compliment the member on his very fine speech. The hon. member spoke not only to the issue of saving the planet, but he also talked about this whole notion of creating national standards. I believe that is how national will is created and from that national will we develop a sense of patriotism and a feeling for our country.

The hon. member talked about national standards on the environment and I support that totally. Can the member not see it is also important in other areas? For example, is it not better to have a national standard and a national program on multiculturalism rather than 10 different provincial ones? This whole notion of creating national programs and national standards should not just be on the environment but on other issues as well. Then those in the disadvantaged regions could come up to the advantaged regions, for example in health care, education and training. Would the hon. member not agree that would be a much better way to go to build a nation?

**Mr. Abbott:** Madam Speaker, I appreciate the comments of the hon. member.

When we are dealing with issues like water and air, we are dealing with absolutes. When we are dealing with issues relating to multiculturalism, biculturalism and those other issues, we are talking about interaction among human beings. While I respect the fact he has made that linkage, I suggest they are slightly different. When we are dealing with the absolutes of water and air, water and air proceed over political boundaries and that is the absolute place where we must have national standards.