

Private Members' Business

I am pleased that with the presentation of Bill C-13 to the House, which will hopefully be coming before us for debate in the next weeks if not days, there is a system put in place where the public has a clearly defined role to play. We accept the fact that we are in a very real sense simply stewards on occasion acting on their behalf.

Some of the success of the strategy we have put in place is evident in the work of the Canadian Council of the Ministers of the Environment, of which the federal minister happens to be the chairman at the moment. Here I think you have good evidence of the ability of governments to work together, to put together national plans to prevent and reduce urban smog, to put together strategies to reduce packaging materials by some 50 per cent by the year 2000.

What I see operative in the activities of the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment is a common determination to address the problems at hand without worrying too much about who is responsible for what part of the process.

I would look as well to the unity proposal which is before us and to note that for the first time there will be reference in our Constitution to the area of the environment and to the concept of sustainable development, but indeed it will be part of a new section too, the very important Canada clause.

All of these steps in my mind are being achieved because we accept the fact that governments at all levels must work now and in the future, as we have begun to do in the past, with their counterparts elsewhere, and with all those players who are part of society.

I would note in closing that the problems which we face as Canadians are not necessarily unique to us as Canadians, and that has been very evident in the House these last few days with the attention being given to the question of the ozone layer.

I would say in closing that the type of co-operation and partnerships which I envisage being required are required of international partners as well. I simply close by alluding to the Montreal protocol, one of the best examples of the international community coming together. Initially there were some 25 nations that signed. I think the number is over twice that now, understanding as they do that internationally as well as domestically the solution to sustainable development is not necessarily

found in constitutions or on pieces of paper, but in a desire and a strategy of working together by forming partnerships and linkages throughout Canada and throughout the world.

• (1730)

[*Translation*]

Hon. Chas. L. Caccia (Davenport): Mr. Speaker, let me first of all thank the hon. member for The Battlefords—Meadow Lake for submitting such an interesting and very important motion to us. He has always shown great interest in the environment and with this motion today he is presenting a subject of the utmost importance because the whole country is interested in making Canada's Constitution the best for present and future generations.

I really want to thank the hon. member for The Battlefords—Meadow Lake for his initiative.

[*English*]

The intervention to which I just listened by the parliamentary secretary unfortunately was not very focused because of the fact that he used half of his time to elaborate on the government record, thus engaging in a neat and clever propaganda exercise.

He did, in all fairness, devote part of his time to the motion, but in his critique I wonder whether he really read the motion by the member for The Battlefords—Meadow Lake. The parliamentary secretary said that if such a motion were to be adopted, it would isolate the environment. It would undermine the partnership to achieve sustainable development. He said it would lead to a confrontational approach. Imagine, he envisages a confrontational approach from this motion. It will limit the flexibility of legislators who prefer a system of co-operation and partnership. I am paraphrasing the parliamentary secretary, of course, but I am pretty close to what he said.

He said that he wants to work toward a common goal. Then he elaborated as to why he is proud of the green plan and the government record. Well, we will leave that for another occasion.

The motion by the member for the Battlefords—Meadow Lake wants an amendment in the Constitution to recognize the right of every person in Canada to a safe and healthy environment. Mr. Speaker, I ask you wheth-