

*Supply*

At a time when we have the contradiction of the Government funding megaprojects, it is crucial for the House to understand that we want environmental assessments of a non-partisan nature but of a crucially political nature. As the Member opposite pointed out, this is the House of Commons. It is a political body. It does not necessarily have to be a partisan body on this issue. We must think in the long term and not the short term, not respond to government polls but respond to the very real and sincere concerns of not only Canadians but of citizens of the world.

We are concerned about the transition to a sustainable society, and the questions arising from that are undeniably large ones.

Fundamental changes are required in the way we weigh costs and benefits and make decisions. The federal Government must be prepared to demonstrate leadership in adopting these changes, not just in matters of national policy but its own day to day operation. In this spirit, this is why we want an environmental officer of the House.

Parliament Hill, as those of us who are new here perhaps see more clearly, is a city within a city. We have an opportunity to demonstrate to Canada and to the world that we are serious about this environmental concern by getting our own house in order and by recycling the paper used here. I come from the Province of British Columbia where we had over the centuries complete destruction of forests. It is not necessary if we recycle wisely.

Implementing the Brundtland report entails more than just mouthing the words of sustainable development and attaching environmentally friendly stickers to everything in sight.

The report envisaged a whole new approach to economic development. We could begin here on Parliament Hill in some of the things that we are doing. We do not just want to tinker at the edges. We must show that we are prepared to undertake fundamental change.

In environmental assessment, we are asking the federal Government to begin an immediate re-evaluation of all its policies and programs asking if each is environmentally sound.

That brings us to my area of interest, that is, international development. In the last Budget, it was clearly demonstrated by the Government that it did not understand the recommendations of the Brundtland Commission or its concern and observation that not only are we interconnected internationally but we are interlocked. We are interdependent. We in a developed country seem to think we are immune from the kind of damage that is occurring internationally in the Third World. The Government felt that immunity sufficient to be able to bring the budget cuts to foreign aid.

What that means is we may reduce our deficit. We are looking after ourselves, but we are exporting the environmental degradation to those countries that can least afford it, those people who are the most vulnerable.

It makes no sense if we place that on a large international scale. Many scientists and other esteemed people have told us that we are on this planet together; if we violate one part of it, all of it is violated. It is the budget proposals on foreign aid, reductions to foreign aid, that demonstrate that the Government has no understanding of that dynamic at all.

As to the concerns about waste products and use of toxic waste, we have a priority substances list under the Canadian Environmental Protection Act. There is a need to ensure, however, that time lines for elimination are set. There is a need for targets and timetables for reduction of chemicals in our environment. We must see sustainable development distinct from cleaning up the mess that we are already in. Some 10 per cent of world trade is now in chemicals. They move into the environment. Many work their way up through the food chain to plants, animals, and humans.

Much of our drinking water has been contaminated by toxic substances such as PCBs, dioxins, and furans.

The recent revelation of high PCB levels in the breast milk of Inuit women substantiates the need for national and global action, for zero discharge standards, to prevent pesticides and other potentially harmful chemicals from moving through the atmosphere to be deposited in areas far from their application, storage, or disposal.

With some 100,000 chemicals on the market and some 600,000 new chemicals coming on to the market per year, it is clear that workers and the public are best protected by prohibiting contact in as many locations as possible. It