

Government Orders

However, I am not sure the hon. member who has just addressed the House was in the House when I spoke earlier this afternoon and made reference to the testimony of the deans of forestry of three of Canada's universities given at our subcommittee on forestry this week. In this testimony we were cautioned against quick fixes to sustainable development, against management by constraint instead of management by planning, by direction and by comprehensive, integrated, multiple use approaches to our environment. That is the reason I would not support this motion, and I would ask the hon. member if he would undertake to read that testimony. Hon. members of the New Democratic Party did not make that undertaking. I hope they will read the testimony because they will find in it an approach to sustainable development and an approach to the implementation of the principles of the Brundtland Report whereby we adopt its principles in a progressive, constructive and achievable manner, not just blindly as wild statements of principle for which we are not responsible.

Mr. Mills: Madam Speaker, if I can respond to that, I think we are forgetting that the report of the Brundtland Commission was not some document basically dreamt up in the middle of the night which was recommending quick fixes. This is something on which some of the best and the brightest in the world have been working for years.

I am not trying to argue with the professors of forestry from New Brunswick. I will read their testimony. I guess my point is a communications point. There is an international perception that the Brundtland Commission is a respected credo. What is happening here today is a perceptual problem. The world recognizes that document as one on which we all must work to set standards and guidelines. The problem that we have today is that the Government of Canada is going to be voting against a Brundtland Commission guideline that has substance.

I know the hon. member is not against sustainable development, but this is going to make a very tough sell to not only the people of Canada but to the rest of the world, and that was my point.

Mr. Fulton: Madam Speaker, I appreciate the remarks of the member who has just spoken. Before asking the question, I would just like to read the motion again so that we all have it clear in our minds:

That, in the opinion of this House,—

That is what we are seeking through a vote in this House. It is not binding on the government. It is in the opinion of the House. It continues:

—the government should move to complete the national park system (land and marine) by the year 2000—

This is the key wording on the 12 per cent:

—and should implement the recommendation of the World Commission on Environment and Development (Brundtland Report) that Canada protect at least 12 per cent of land and marine zones.

There is no direct time deadline. We are simply seeking the opinion of the House to tell Canadians. That is why I worded it so carefully. I did not want to get into what everyone now claims as some kind of silver bullet and all these other things.

Referring to the point the hon. member for Broadview—Greenwood was just making, in the concluding two articles of Chapter 6 of the Brundtland report there are these two points:

Since 1970 the networks have expanded in extent by more than 80 per cent, around two-thirds of which are in the Third World. That is where the growth on protected lands are. But a great deal more remains to be done; a consensus of professional opinions suggests that the total expanse of protected areas needs to be at least tripled if it is to constitute a representative sample of earth's ecosystems.

That is true of our country, as with most. This is really the key wording:

There is still time to save species and their ecosystems. It is an indispensable prerequisite for sustainable development. Our failure to do so will not be forgiven by future generations.

The Brundtland committee heard representatives from much of the world, the Third World as well as the developed world. Scientific opinion or consensus came to this conclusion and the entire body says that setting aside these areas is an indispensable prerequisite for sustainable development.

I would just like to hear, further on your remarks, why it is so important when there is not a deadline on the 12 per cent, but that is the international scientific consensus, and why it would be so wrong, for whatever reasons, for this Chamber to send out the wrong signal on turning down the fundamental building block of the Brundtland commission?