OFFICIAL BILINGUALISM

Mr. Ed Harper (Simcoe Centre, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the third petition is dealing with official bilingualism and I present it on behalf of the citizens of Sarnia—Lambton.

Given that the large majority of Canadians are opposed to the official languages policy imposed on them by a former Liberal government, the petitioners request that a referendum be held to either accept or reject this flawed policy.

* * *

[*Translation*]

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

The Deputy Speaker: Shall all questions stand?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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[*English*]

MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would ask that the one notice of motion for the production of papers be allowed to stand.

The Deputy Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES ACT

Hon. Anne McLellan (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.) moved that Bill C–48, an act to establish the Department of Natural Resources and to amend related acts, be read the third time and passed.

She said: Mr. Speaker, it is a great pleasure for me this afternoon to speak on the occasion of the third reading of Bill C–48, a bill to establish the Department of Natural Resources.

This afternoon I wish to focus my brief comments on the important role of research and development as these concepts relate to the resource sectors and my department.

In the red book of the Liberal Party of Canada we stated our commitment to encourage progress toward the concept of sustainable development by integrating economic and environmental values and objectives.

One of our key challenges as a government in meeting this commitment is to create resource production and processing technologies that are less harmful to the environment and government and industry must meet this challenge by working in collaboration and partnership.

Government research facilities will continue to make an important contribution to R and D but the involvement of industry, universities, colleges and levels of government other than federal is essential.

The role of the federal government in the natural resources sectors is that of partner and that of a natural bridge between industry, other levels of government and the academy.

Natural Resources Canada has a lead role to play in the way our natural resources are managed. NRCAN, along with other science and technology departments, is responsible for ensuring that the Canadian taxpayers' investment of approximately $7 billion in science and technology is focused on areas that have the highest priority in terms of meeting our important economic, social and environmental goals.

By facilitating co–operation between all stakeholders government can ensure that the science and technology at work in these sectors contributes to the wealth of our economy and the health of our natural resources.

NRCAN has four main scientific branches: the Canadian Forest Service, the Geological Survey of Canada, the Canada Centre for Mineral and Energy Technology, otherwise known as CANMET, and Geomatics Canada. All these branches make important contributions to research and development in partnership with others.

• (1535)

Let me now give some specific examples of how my department fulfils this important role. In mining let us look to the problem of acid mine drainage, an environmental liability for the Canadian mining industry, with a potential price tag of between $3 billion to $5 billion.

To address this challenge the mine environmental neutral drainage program, otherwise known as MEND, unites the efforts of four federal government departments, eight provincial governments, seventeen mining companies and a number of academic institutions. It has developed new leading edge technology that can be transferred and marketed around the world. The program has also saved to date hundreds of millions of dollars for Canadian mining companies.

Let me move to the area of geomatics. When it comes to a discussion of innovative technology I believe that some of the most remarkable and innovative technological developments have occurred in the field of geomatics. Integrating economic and environmental objectives for resource development begins with accurate information. Working in partnership our geomatics industry and the Government of Canada have been instrumental in developing, applying and transferring both innovative