

Private Members' Business

My friend Patti Carson who just recently wrote a book, *Green is Gold* went through an entire list of companies across Canada which, after their conversion or after putting the green filter on their company, found that the savings were just absolutely staggering. Not only were the savings staggering but they found that the client support, because of their conversion, was dramatic. I think that when we have such a straightforward motion as this, a motion that will lead, obviously, to all kinds of new job opportunities, this ultimately will lead to an expertise in this country that we could export. All of a sudden the Government of Canada could be converted into a world class model operation, not only in terms of ourselves, but again I repeat, linkage to the private sector and how we put standards on those suppliers to government. Boy, oh boy, could you imagine what we could do with that in terms of our relationship to countries around the world? I think that would lead to a lot of new job opportunities. Jobs that are lasting, not just make work jobs, but jobs that have a long life.

I urge all members of this House to get behind this motion and put it into a state where it is not just rhetoric but real activity.

Mr. Felix Holtmann (Portage—Interlake): Mr. Speaker, I, like the distinguished member for Broadview—Greenwood, would like to participate in this motion presented by the opposition colleague from Ottawa West here this afternoon. I would like to not only commend her but also the member for Broadview—Greenwood who just spoke. These can get to be tongue twisters. We should maybe bring in a law that allows just one name for a constituency instead of four or five and we might have less difficulty with them, or call them district number 1 to 295 or something. That would work a little easier.

This is interesting. I think everyone is genuinely interested and concerned about environmental issues. There are now so many rules, regulations and laws that have been drafted. It may be argued by many that we may have too many laws and possibly others may argue that if we just implement the rules and laws we presently have with regard to the concerns that different sectors of our country and our government has with the environment, we may not have to make another one.

I listened with interest to this debate. What I have just heard probably makes a lot more sense in terms of what we could do as a government just on some very simple

things such as the conservation of water. Possibly there are many other areas.

We talk about buses and ministers' cars running for hours sitting out front in the event that someone may want to jump in and go to their office. Well, they are not exactly helping the environment. We are burning all kinds of fuel, but should we pass a law stating this should not be done? I think we have to use more common sense than legislation around here and show that kind of leadership as opposed to putting it down.

My colleague mentioned the green plan. I just wanted to point out that there are some pretty positive things in that particular piece of legislation that somehow covers, I believe, what was suggested in this motion.

It says: "It is the government policy that new policies and programs coming before cabinet for a decision be subject to an environmental review". That is there. "Each minister is responsible for doing an environmental assessment of the policy and program initiative prior to any final decisions being taken by the government and public statement on the environmental implications of the initiative is to accompany the official announcement of each initiative, especially where the environmental impact is significant".

It may be argued that is not strong enough. It may be argued that it should say "on anything". Who is going to decide what is significant and what is not? I think we get into a form of words.

I can tell you there is the other side which complicates initiatives of the government and initiatives of the private sector and initiatives of business.

• (1730)

In some cases, when you have ordinary citizens objecting to a project, there are so many rules and regulations they can hold up these projects through the courts, through some piece of legislation that exists today. I had this just happen in my riding where a very, very famous, in my view, organization and one very environmentally friendly to Canada by the name of Ducks Unlimited, created a marsh in my district and created a habitat for hundreds upon thousands of geese and ducks and, I think, something like 250 species of wildlife birds. It decided to share that with the public and put an interpretive centre and its head office right in the middle of the marsh, only to find out that there were all kind of organizations saying that they were not friendly with the