

To have a precedent set today where the government is voting against such a basic motion is very dangerous. I think it will send the wrong signal to Canadians, that all of a sudden the lead House in this country, the national Chamber, is breaking down on an issue where we all are united. I have not been in this House as long as the member for Rosedale who also is my member of Parliament and I have great respect for him. But there has got to be a way to send the united signal to the people of Canada. I think that had better be done by Monday.

We all know that the Brundtland Commission has been supported by nearly every government in the world. The recommendation that our national park system today be complete by the year 2000 by the Brundtland standard is not an unrealistic objective. It is not an unrealistic objective because this is the one issue where Canadians are ahead of us politicians.

There are children watching in schools today who are going to be confused because they are going to see us wrangling over procedure. They are going to see the government against the Brundtland Commission. We are seemingly for national park completion alone. We know that is not the case. We know that the Minister of the Environment is for completion. I think that they have to take the leap and get on with this.

• (1630)

If we cannot look after and maintain our parks and wildlife areas, the questions that come to my mind are: Are we going to break down on the Brundtland Commission guidelines when it comes to how we are going to maintain our cities? How are we going to make them more liveable? What are we going to do when we need new national standards for automobile emissions, when we need new standards for waste and water treatment? Are we going to take the same approach, where all of a sudden we are going to find ways of maybe not following the Brundtland Commission guidelines? What is going to happen to our attitude toward sustainable farming and so on?

We have already seen another example in Bill C-29 respecting the Forestry Act where we have endorsed the Brundtland Commission. We also see many examples across the country where provinces are not living up to it.

When the member for Rosedale talks about the fact that these relationships are municipal and they are

provincial, I agree with him, but it is up to this Chamber to take the lead. This Chamber leads not only Canada but is our voice abroad. It is a bad thing for us to send out a signal that we are not trying to achieve the international standard.

The issue of the environment has always been an issue on which I have taken an absolutely non-partisan approach. I think most members in this House know that I have taken that approach from day one. This is the one area where we must all work together. Let us not disappoint the people of Canada today and let us figure out a way, between now and Monday, that we can get ourselves back on track and make sure we meet the recommendations of the Brundtland Commission.

Mr. Bird: Madam Speaker, I would like to acknowledge the significant contribution of the hon. member who has just spoken to environmental awareness through the organizational efforts he put into the conference *Our World* in Toronto last year. I was pleased to be invited to speak on that occasion and I spoke on the subject of forestry and on the concepts of integrated management and sustainable development as they pertain to forestry.

I believe that we are united in our concern for the environment and in our desire to ensure that environmental imperatives permeate all the things we do and decisions we make in this government and in the affairs of this nation. I certainly am committed firmly in that direction.

What I am concerned about and what I would not support at this stage, as I have indicated in respect of this motion, is the absolutism of one particular resolution that identifies 12 per cent, 15 per cent or 8 per cent of our land. As the hon. member for Rosedale said, we are close to agreement on the objectives of this resolution. The Minister of the Environment said, on January 22, 1990:

— our goal must be to complete the network of our parks by the year 2000.

I have instructed my officials to work on a plan to include in the global action plan of the government a strategy to complete this network by the year 2000, with a clear commitment for the establishment of a certain number of parks within the next five years.

There is no question that we are going in the same direction.