

fallen into a very large trap, and I may have to remind him of it during the course of the next few minutes.

First of all, I want to say how delighted I am that the member for Skeena has raised this matter by way of an opposition day motion. I think all members of all sides agree in the importance of the subject that has been raised here this afternoon. He has already read the statistics into the record about the kind of overwhelming public support there is. I do not think there can be any doubt about that whatsoever.

In addition, I would say there is very strong agreement on all sides of the House with respect to the importance of preserving for posterity the 39 ecological zones. One assumes that the total representative sampling of the land base of Canada, plus, I think, some 26 marine zones that would give a proper representation to that aspect of our resource heritage.

There are two things that are fundamental here this afternoon. One is the agreement that we must have a full representative sample preserved while it is still possible. I guess the second point is that we must do it within a reasonable time period. A lot has been made of the fact of how long it has taken us during the first more than one and a quarter centuries to get to the stage where we are at today, which is roughly about 50 per cent of our over-all national objective.

What I am troubled by, and I hope the member will listen carefully to what I am going to say—

Mr. Blaikie: I'm all ears.

Mr. MacDonald (Rosedale): Well, I was not going to say anything about your physical characteristics—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

• (1550)

Mr. MacDonald (Rosedale): What I am troubled by are two things that seem to be running in train here. One is that somehow an opposition member can introduce a debatable motion which, on its merits or on some of its merits at least, should then allow us to totally forget the context in which we are having this discussion. I know the member has been here for some years and with some intermission I have been here a few years myself. And if there is anything I have learned in this Chamber, not just in this Parliament but in fact in any of the parliamentary traditions in operation, is that when one is discussing

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supply and when a motion is moved by any opposition member, that is a matter of confidence in the government. There can be no other interpretation.

An hon. member: Not true.

Mr. MacDonald (Rosedale): Well, I am sorry. My friend from Winnipeg says, "Not true". I think he has either a short-term memory or a somewhat inspired and selective view of the rule changes introduced by the—

Mr. Blaikie: We changed the rules while you were away.

Mr. MacDonald (Rosedale): Listen, my friend, listen carefully. There is no way that any committee recommending rule changes can change the essential character of the debate on supply.

Mr. Milliken: Look at the precedents.

Mr. MacDonald (Rosedale): My other friend has come here a little more recently. He better look through all the precedents and realize that on the issue of supply, which I think covers at least seven centuries of parliamentary history, when an opposition member moves a motion, whatever that motion is, and that motion comes to a vote, it can be nothing more than a motion of confidence in the government of the day.

I am sorry the member for Davenport is unavoidably absent at the moment because I think he would have great difficulty in disagreeing with this. He sat for many years in a government that argued this case night and day. Several of my colleagues on this side of the House know that we use some of these same hoary arguments, but they do not hold water; they will not hold water. I think it is foolish in the extreme to waste the time of the House in debating what a former Prime Minister and distinguished parliamentarian said were rabbit tracks. We are not interested in rabbit tracks this afternoon. We are interested in the central objective which I think the member for Skeena properly introduced which is the achievement of a full representative sampling of these ecological zones in a reasonable time period. That is the issue. That is what we want to achieve and no amount of phoney struggling with the rules should get in the way of that objective. I am sorry, I think our friends to our left are being badly misled in trying to divert this to some kind of phoney debate about what is possible or not possible in a votable motion on supply. It is one of the