

Government Orders

there has been a change in annual temperatures. There has been a change in average winter temperatures.

• (1725)

I would be glad to show the hon. member a map to that effect, which in essence shows that the increase in average temperatures that has taken place over the last 30 years shows a considerable warming in certain parts of the world.

This warming has led to the melting of the Arctic and Antarctic caps. This melting has produced a certain flow of cold water into the northwest Atlantic and some other oceans, which could be an explanation for the fact that certain fisheries have disappeared.

I am saying that if this trend continues and we have over the next 30 years another +1.5C as an average increase—thus amounting to +3C—we will be in for some big problems because the water levels of our coastal cities will be higher. We will have to do some basic coastal public works.

The livelihood and the survival of millions of people in certain parts of the Pacific where the islands rise only a metre or a metre and a half above sea level will be in serious danger. Scientists are speaking about the flooding of some one-quarter of Bangladesh.

We will see the movement toward the north of agriculture and of forests. In other words, we will have a completely different set of natural resources and of problems resulting from that. It may be for the next generation of politicians.

Mr. Charlie Penson (Peace River): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Davenport for his comments regarding sustainable development. The member talked about the important need for sustainable development, particularly in the industry of forestry.

I wonder if he would consider that one of our most important natural resources we have in this country is our resource of top soil for farming. Top soil gives us the ability to produce food but is being eroded at an alarming rate.

Since the beginning of organized agriculture on the great plains we have lost about one-half of our top soil. Yet we have government farm policies that encourage this practice to continue. Where would the hon. member rate this in his overall scheme of sustainable development?

Mr. Caccia: Mr. Speaker, it is nice to be treated as an expert when you are not one. Coming from the great agricultural riding of Davenport, one would perhaps expect more from me. The most important natural resource we have is the human resource in this country. We all agree on that.

Whether top soil for farming should be the next one—it may be so—I do not know. I know that the Senate in 1983, particularly Senator Sparrow, produced a very interesting report on the losses in top soil. That report has been languishing since 1984. He even went so far as quantifying the yearly losses in dollars in top soil, which was a unique feat by our historical standards.

I should urge the hon. member to get a copy of Senator Sparrow's report and perhaps ask questions of the minister tomorrow.

Mr. Darrel Stinson (Okanagan—Shuswap): Mr. Speaker, Bill C-48 has been described by many as a housekeeping bill, to combine the federal Department of Forestry with the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources.

In my opinion Bill C-48 is far more than that. Today I want to begin by praising Bill C-48 while also raising a few concerns. First, I wish to praise the government for continuing with this integration started by the former government, both from a standpoint of tax dollars saved and new understandings included in Bill C-48. From a recent departmental briefing I see that this amalgamation is expected to save something in the range of \$41 million over a four-year period starting in 1994-95 primarily through streamlining at the corporate level, including such things as putting together financial services and human resources of what formerly were two cabinet level departments.

• (1730)

The jobs of the rank and file public service generally were spared the axe although the downsizing did remove a cabinet minister and three assistant deputy ministers.

The preservation of those other jobs is perhaps due to the fact that the Canadian Forest Services—and I would like to comment on the forest services here—is already one of the most decentralized of all in the federal government with some 90 per cent of the people not in Ottawa.

Another reason for praising this legislation is the new understanding presented by Bill C-48 of what principles and methods should be used to manage the nation's natural resources. For example under "interpretation", Bill C-48 defines sustainable development as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs".

The bill's list of the minister's duties in clause 6, items (d), (e), and (f) are as follows:

The minister shall:

(d) have regard to the integrated management and sustainable development of Canada's natural resources;

(e) Seek to enhance the responsible development and use of Canada's natural resources and the competitiveness of Canada's natural resources products;