

Deforestation rampant

Extinction of species threatens the globe

by Scott Randall

Dr. Norman Myers packed the McMechan Auditorium with people eager to hear his public lecture on the rapidly disappearing tropical rain forests and stressed that every individual can help face this challenge.

About 150 people filled the McMechan Auditorium last Thursday to hear Myers speak on *The Extinction of Species and Habitats Around the Globe: At What Cost?*. The talk focused on the vanishing tropical forests and the profound effects this is having on the entire world.

The tropical rain forests of Central and South America, Africa, Asia and some Pacific islands are being cleared for lumbering, cattle ranching and farming. The thin layer of top soil left behind is only useful for a few years, after which a new tract of forest has to be exploited.

such a rate that the tropical rain forests may be lost within a few decades.

A "mass extinction spasm" could drastically affect the evolution of life on this planet. In order for life to evolve there has to be a wide diversity of species to create a large "gene pool" from which new genetic combinations can emerge. According to Myers, one half of the species on earth are found in the tropical rain forests.

Myers says there are many benefits that could be lost to deforestation. In recent years, new sources of food have been found in the tropical rain forests with the possibility of more being found in the future. New medications to fight such diseases as leukemia are being found in the tropical forests. Myers says there is a one-in-four chance that any medication has its origin in a tropical rain forest raw material.

sage on impoverished peasants and land owners of these areas, but some of the biggest culprits are large multinational corporations that exploit the tropics for

Deforestation may cause a "mass extinction spasm"

their resources to provide the Industrialized nations with their way of life at a cheap price.

Myers says a great global effort is needed to stop this and every individual can make a difference; "A lot of people doing a little can do a lot." He says people can write to elected officials in government, and analyze how we live and what products we use that are the product of exploitation of tropical rain forests.

Rather than considering it a problem, Myers sees the situation as a challenge, saying "magnificent possibilities" could result from our actions.

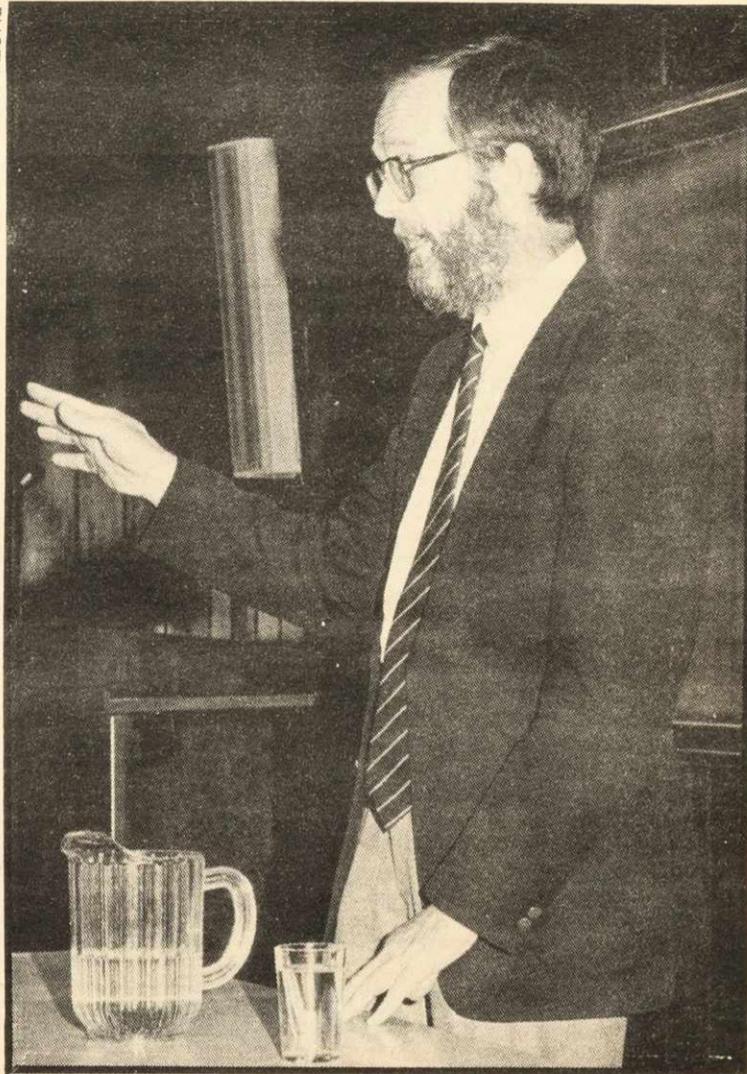
Conservation is not necessarily detrimental to corporations and capitalist enterprise. Myers points out that the fastest growing sector in the economy is recycling. As well, the boycott of Burger King (they once used beef from Central America) has led to better cattle-ranching techniques in those areas, once the boycott was lifted, that will maintain the industry for years to come. If there had been no boycott, the industry would have depleted itself within a few years.

More sustainable cattle-ranching techniques often go against the Central American culture, which celebrates the image of a man on horseback, ignorant of what he is doing to nature. Myers says this is much like the way our culture celebrates the image of a man with his car.

To save the land, more people must go to the cities instead of farming the tropical forests. More jobs in manufacturing, in such sectors as electronics, would have to be created in Third World nations. Myers says many protectionist bills that limit imports from the third world add to the deforestation, because all the people that lose their jobs go back to farming and depleting the tropical forests.

Myers has travelled to over 70 countries around the world giving this message and raising consciousness about our fragile world. He teaches at Oxford University of England and is an international consultant on environment and development. He is the author of such books as *The Sinking Ark*, and his articles have appeared in National Geographic and the New York Times.

PHOTO: Raymond Mah



Dr. Norman Myers, international consultant on environment and development, speaking on the dramatic impact of deforestation.

Special places need protection

by Scott Randall

An environmental workshop concluded that Atlantic Canada needs a stronger environment lobby, more education and more involvement with the private sector.

About 60 people attended the workshop "Valuing Special Places and Rare Species" on Friday November 25. Most of them were from the universities and from the government though there were also some people from business and non-government organizations.

Some delegates expressed concern that certain groups were not represented. Raymond Cote of the School for Resource and Environment Studies at Dal says they will try to include more groups in the future, though it is hard to do in a one-day workshop.

The delegates decided at the workshop that there should be more education and programs in the school system dealing with special places and the preservation of the environment.

They also noted that Central and Western Canada have larger environment lobby groups, and ways to create a more effective lobby in Atlantic Canada should be looked at. Art Hanson, former director for the School for Resource and Environmental Studies, says we can build on

experience gained in other regions to improve the situation in Nova Scotia.

Delegates also said there should be more involvement with the private sector. They would also like to get more donations from private sources from wildlife funds. Cote said he had hoped for more representation from the private sector. However, a representative from the Bowater and Mersey pulp and paper company attended, as well as a recreational land developer.

The preservation of special places and species need not all be done by the government. Much work is done by the Boy Scouts, the Girl Guides, and numerous wildlife groups. An example of this is the large tract of land that was recently purchased on Brier Island in Nova Scotia by the Nature Conservancy in Toronto, who will see that this special place is preserved.

Perhaps best of all, the workshop established networks between the various groups that work in this area.

Cote says environmental costs have to be factored into the uses of raw materials. It is not appropriate for future generations to be saddled with our misuse of the environment. "Environmentally friendly" products, ones that are biodegradable and not the result of exploitation of the environment, are also a welcome trend.

Upcoming conference

New perspective on immigrant women

by Jessica Meijer

This week the International Education Centre at St. Mary's will mark the 40th Anniversary of the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights in a unique way. A conference this weekend will recognize the contributions immigrant women



have made to Canada. Previously, the media has focussed on the plight of immigrant women and the hardships they have suffered, but not to actually identify and give credit to these women for the contributions they have made to the country. This conference hopes to give a new perspective to

the role of immigrant women by featuring an exhibit of their artistic and cultural expression, in conjunction with a student-teacher conference about immigrant women.

Organizer Debra Dickson says although the mental picture of a poor woman dressed in black, scurrying down Toronto's Chinatown streets, is often identified as being the typical immigrant, this is not so.

Working class women's contributions are to be examined at this conference as well as contributions from other women, of varying economic and personal backgrounds.

Dickson says the conference will hopefully serve as a place for information sharing, and a place where teachers can see how they can integrate these issues into existing courses.

The Conference begins tonight with the keynote speaker Dr. Roxanna Ng, an associate professor at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. Dr. Ng is an immigrant to Canada herself, and has worked with immigrant women's groups across the country since 1976. She has written various books and articles on immigrant women. For further information call the I.E.C. at 420-5419.