

Supply

conservation—the single most effective thing that we can do to save this planet—from \$500 million to a miserly \$50 million.

The Minister of Finance can get up and talk about the financial reserves all he wants. That is window-dressing. There are no financial reserves. The reserves in this year's budget, as he knows perfectly well, have but cut and not increased to accommodate the environment or anything else.

The Green Plan talks about biological diversity. Just this past week, 10 people at the National Research Council, including five senior research officers in the biological section, were laid off.

We have broken promises. We have had repeated promises over the last year, and I am sure before I entered this House, to table environmental assessment legislation. We have repeated promises that we will have a strong action plan by this spring. March 21 was over a week ago. That was the beginning of spring, and this is all we have.

It is also important to talk about what is not here. What is not here is any strong commitment by the government itself to act on its own, to ensure that all governmental practices are in accordance with the principles of sustainable development. What minister has said to his department: "Before you produce your budget, I want to know everything you are doing that has an impact on the environment. Where it is a negative impact, I want you to change it. I want to know how we are using the world's resources. Where it is excessive I want you to change it. I will not approve a budget until I have those answers." Not one minister has said that to his or her department. That is the way this government needs to operate.

We have the Minister of the Environment saying: "Environment is the responsibility of every minister". Then we have the Minister of Industry, Science and Technology saying instead: "The environment is nice. It is like poetry and flowers, kind of fun to have but it has nothing to do with the economy".

This is the government that says it believes in sustainable development. What does it do instead? It votes down, in this House, a motion that would have made the Department of Industry, Science and Technology responsible, among other things, for sustainable development.

Obviously, it does not understand the question. How can the government, at this stage, say: "Should Canada commit itself to targets for the emission of carbon dioxide?" How can it even ask that question? How can we have the Minister of Energy out in Vancouver saying: "Should Canada act before the rest of the world acts, or should we wait for everybody else? Should the government seek to establish agreements with the western provinces on emissions?" How can those questions even be asked when we know how urgent and serious this situation is?

This report does not at all address sustainable development. It does not address the problems of the Third World. We know that one of the greatest causes of environmental degradation is poverty. Does this plan talk about what kinds of aid we provide to the Third World, ensuring that that aid is done in an environmentally compatible way, in fact, specifically directing our aid towards projects that assist Third World countries to avoid environmental damage?

Does it talk about the millions of dollars that we provide through the Export Development Corporation to do major projects abroad in China, India, Indonesia and Thailand? Does it put any limits on how we spend that money and make sure that we are not exporting environmentally damaging technology? It does not. In fact, one of the things holding up environmental assessment legislation is that the Export Development Corporation, for the purposes of aiding business clients, is specifically seeking to exempt itself from that legislation.

It does not talk about what we import and whether we encourage pollution in the Third World by importing goods that perhaps we would be better off not importing. It does not talk about how we control our exports to ensure that we are not exporting damaging goods or goods that can be used in a way that is damaging to the environment.

It does not talk about aboriginal rights. A small country like New Zealand can bring in comprehensive environmental legislation which gives prime importance to the rights of aboriginal peoples, their land rights, their treaty rights and their cultural traditions and a country like Canada cannot. It is appalling that that is not even discussed in this paper.