

*Private Members' Business*

We do have, as the hon. member for Ottawa West said in her initial remarks, a government financial auditor to protect or at least alert the taxpayers to possible abuses by the government of taxpayers' dollars. We also need a government auditor, more importantly an independent auditor on the environment, to protect our air, land, water, and indeed our future from the activities of the human race that in the quest for greater development of this planet is in fact jeopardizing our future.

In June 1989, the New Democratic Party task force on the environment presented a report to the House entitled *Towards a Sustainable Future*. In that report there is a couple of very important quotes which I would like to put on record. One is dealing with why the environment is a difficult matter. It reads: "The existing relationship between the federal government and most development is fundamentally flawed. Despite the government's endorsement of the Brundtland report and the increasingly frequent addition of the words sustainable development to projects across Canada, government and industry have failed to act decisively on that report's recommendations. To date, the federal government has not implemented the policies, measures or targets needed to facilitate the transition to a genuinely sustainable society".

Later in the report *Towards a Sustainable Future* the New Democratic Party talks about the transition to a sustainable society as undeniably and enormous one. "Fundamental changes are required in the way we weigh costs and benefits to make decisions. The federal government must be prepared to demonstrate leadership in adopting these changes, not just in matters of national policy but in its own day-to-day operations. Implementing the Brundtland report entails more than just mouth-ing the words sustainable development and attaching environmentally friendly stickers to everything in sight".

The report envisaged a whole new approach to economic development, not just tinkering at the edges. The federal government must begin an immediate re-evaluation of all its policies and programs, asking if each is in environmentally sound. The federal government must also show leadership by ensuring that the federal government departments, agencies, and Crown corporations practise the principles of sustainability in purchasing, waste management, and other aspects of their operation.

Their compliance would be monitored by a federal environmental auditor.

Our recommendation is that the House of Commons immediately adopt legislation which would establish an environmental auditor to review the sustainability and environmental soundness of all federal projects and undertakings. That report, as I said, was tabled in the House in June 1989.

In May 1990 a regional conference at the ministerial level was held in Bergen, Norway on the follow-up to the report on the World Commission on Environment and Development in the ECE region. The following report was issued: "Action for a Common Future".

In that report they talked about the accountability of this process and the needs of the environment. I would like to quote from the report "Action for a Common Future" presented in Bergen, Norway. They talked about awareness of the public and public participation in the process of environmental assessment. One of their recommendations was: "To undertaking the prior assessment and public reporting of the environmental impact of projects which are likely to have a significant effect on human health and the environment and, so far as practicable, the policies, programs and plans which underlie each project".

They go on to say: "To reaffirm and build on the CSCE conclusions regarding the rights of individuals, groups and organizations concerned with environmental issues and, in addition, to safeguard the rights of individuals and concerned groups to have access to all relevant information and to be consulted and participate in the planning and decision making concerning activities which may affect health and environment, with reasonable access to appropriate legal and administrative remedies."

More important, they go to say: "To develop rules for free and open access to information on the environment. Such rules can increase public participation in the procedures to control pollution and prevent damage to the environment".

These matters, all very important to what we are talking about when we are dealing with the environment, will require the attention of an independent auditor. Only the Canadian government, through legislation here, can ensure that an independent auditor is in place.