



# Bulletin

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## CANADA AND THE WORLD ENVIRONMENT

To "construct three out of ten of the world's base-line stations for determining the quality of the atmosphere; improve the quality of our rivers discharging into the sea; sponsor a world-wide conference on the conservation of the living resources of the sea in Vancouver in February of next year; oppose ocean-dumping of pollutants; propose that big tankers be confined to routes that avoid ecologically-sensitive areas, not only along our own coasts but the world over; and step up our research in the field of marine science", were some of the commitments Canada would make to the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm from June 5 to 16, according to the Minister of the Environment, Mr. Jack Davis, addressing the House of Commons on June 2.

Mr. Davis's introductory statement to the plenary session of the Stockholm Conference follows:

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The main message which I wish to convey to this great assembly today, Mr. President, is simple. It is this. Nature is all-important. Nature's laws, themselves, are universal. They are far-reaching. They deal with life. They concern us all.

Man breaks nature's laws at his peril. He breaks them and succeeding generations are the poorer for his lack of foresight, his lack of sensitivity, his lack of statesmanship on the ecological front.

Man-made laws, up until now at least, are different. They differ from place to place. They differ from one country to the next. They differ often markedly, from one continent, or from one part of the world, to another.

But nature's laws are more exacting. Like the fundamental truths of biological science, they cannot be ignored. Mankind may bend them to suit his convenience. But he will find, in the end, that he is all the poorer for having upset nature in a vain effort to win some short-run economic gain.

What bothers me most is the thought that man, as his numbers and affluence increase, seems bent on creating a dull and uninteresting environment for himself. Mass production, mass consumption, mass disposal, massive refuse heaps - all these are characteristic of an age which has lost sight of the balance of nature, of the revitalizing force which still exists in our great outdoors and which, itself, is threatened by our increasingly pedestrian way of life.

Biology, as a science, is still in its infancy. We know even less about biological phenomena than we do about economics. All the more reason for going slow. All the more reason to try to unravel the mysteries of nature, to monitor changes in our global environment, to play it safe in the harvesting of our living resources. All the more reason to prepare environmental-impact statements before, and not after, we launch new projects on a major scale.

I am not one of those, Mr. President, who believes that economic growth and environmental quality are necessarily in conflict with one another. Quite the opposite. I believe that sound economic planning involves environmental statesmanship of the highest

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