

Supply

Mr. Speaker, we all know that very important and far-reaching decisions are made every day by the Department of Energy. This is why we are constantly grilling this Minister on the question of megaprojects.

The same is true for the Department of Agriculture. We know that certain agricultural practices are damaging the environment, particular topsoil and water. The same can be said about forestry. The same can also be said about practices in the past in the fishing industry.

The Minister and Department of Transport make decisions that have far-reaching implications, for instance, on air quality. Perhaps most important of them all is the Department of Finance, to whom I alluded a moment ago. It is through Budgets, through fiscal measures, through incentives or disincentives that exist in the system and which should be examined and where possible, offered or removed to consumers as well as to industry at large.

Mr. Speaker, we can therefore see what I would call the inadequacy of the way in which governments—and not just the federal Government—operate today. It is therefore necessary to change mandates of the Departments so as to spread the responsibility for the environment across the board, to making environmentally sustainable development the mandate of each and every government Department and agency. Every Minister of the Crown and every Department should, in effect, be made responsible for environmental objectives.

The Department would thus be relieved from the competitive struggle with other Departments. It is quite a heavy burden. They would be able to dedicate energy and time to the development of long-term policies, to the co-ordination of activities between Departments, where necessary, and to anticipate and prevent environmental problems instead of reacting to crises most of the time, as my colleague from Vancouver alluded to a moment ago.

• (1620)

There is even a special rule for a Department such as Supply and Services. The Prime Minister's endorsement last year of sustainable development gives this Department of Supply and Services a special mandate. It is one of the largest purchasers of goods in Canada. Does the Department purchase environmentally friendly prod-

ucts? Does it have a procurement policy to purchase recycled paper or recycled oil? At least, is recycled oil given priority when the purchase has to take effect? Does it apply a policy that new government buildings be equipped with the latest in energy and water conservation technology? Is the environmental record of the company that wishes to have the Government of Canada as its customer made a factor in the eligibility of that company for government contracts? If the Department of Supply and Services has developed such a policy, it is the best kept secret in the country.

We all know that global warming is a reality. Not only is it a threat to Canada, but to the entire globe. Energy policies can have other devastating impacts on the environment and will play a key role on whether or not we will succeed in attaining an environmentally sustainable future as indicated in the preamble of this motion.

I submit to you, Mr. Speaker, that energy policy should be the flagship policy of sustainability. At the present time we have the absurd and very alarming situation whereby the Government, while committed to the idea of sustainable development, is pursuing an outdated energy policy which, among other issues, includes the abandonment of any effort in renewable energy promotion research and development. Not only that, but it is committed to the abandonment of energy efficiency as a goal. To make it even worse, it has a commitment to very expensive megaprojects which will increase our dependency on fossil fuels and make carbon dioxide pollution worse. This in turn will add to the greenhouse effect and increase the momentum of global climate warming.

This paradox is captured in the headline of an article in today's *Ottawa Citizen*. It states: "Fossil-fuel energy vital to Canada's future, Epp says". Toward the end of the article, the Minister of Energy (Mr. Epp) argues that Canada must also reduce emissions of carbon dioxide. He cannot have it both ways. In addition, the Minister proclaims a belief in the market setting Canada's energy policy. Yet he defends \$5-billion worth of subsidies to fossil-fuel megaprojects. How can he reconcile those two positions? It is mind-boggling to me. It takes the acrobatic feat of a major performer in a circus. However, here we are dealing with serious matters, and a statement made by today's Minister of Energy who is giving us profound reasons to be extremely worried about him and his policy.