

*Private Members' Business*

to the temptation to put everything on the constitutional table.

As far as constitutional rights or environmental rights in the Constitution *per se* go, I would make a couple of basic comments. I believe we do not need more words on paper. I do not think that is going to help the environment. Changing words in the Constitution is not really going to help the environment, but I think changing attitudes will.

The problem is not so much with Them, with a capital *t*, and by that I mean governments or institutions or constitutions.

I do not think it is right for us as individual Canadians to sort of institutionalize our environmental problems, to put them off into something where we do not need to worry about them every day because some court, some institution, some level of government or some body of politicians is looking after them. I think that may tend to blind us to the reality that we are all polluters in our daily lives. That is what we really need to address.

I am not sure that the hon. member's motion, if adopted, would not really give people false assurances that the problem is looked after because it is stuck away in the Constitution somewhere. I do not for a minute want any of us, by doing so, to try and absolve ourselves of the personal responsibility we all have for environmental protection and maintenance. Instead, I think it would be useful if we were all concentrating on helping people know what they could be doing in their individual and daily lives in order to help the environment of Canada.

Too often in this place we pretend that government is going to be able to solve problems. What is government? Government is a representation of all of us, our country, our society. All of Canada is represented here in the House of Commons. We are all trying our best to represent what our constituents want, but if we allow our constituents to think that we can solve all these problems without them I think we are making our problems even worse. The Constitution is nothing but the rule book of this society and no rule book can really help the environment; it is people who have to do that.

I think we need to change the way people think and act and not change the rules that govern our society. That brings us right back down to the basics.

I do not want to diminish the hon. member's attempt to do something for the environment but, with respect, I think all of us have those tools within our own grasp. I do not want to be hokey about it, but we can all reduce, recycle, re-use and rethink. We can all attack our own environmental problems in our own households. It starts in the kitchen. It starts in the garage. It starts cutting the lawn. It starts with all those little things we do daily. Maybe we ought to be putting more energy into communicating those kinds of things rather than constitutional change.

All of us can conserve energy. You get in your car and you start driving. There are things you can do to conserve energy while you are doing that. When it comes to heating our homes and all of these little daily chores, there are things we can do to help the environment. We can protect water. We can take care of hazardous wastes. We can stop putting that fertilizer junk on our lawns. We can do a lot of things that will help.

In terms of protecting the air quality in individual households, we do not need to use CFCs. We can make sure our cars are tuned up. For goodness sake, there are basic common sense, fundamental things we can do every day to achieve the objective the hon. member is trying to achieve through legislation, constitutions, institutions and bodies of politicians.

We are talking about actions, not words. I think they go way beyond what any constitutional change could do.

A few moments ago the hon. member across the way from Toronto took a little shot at property rights and the environment. Lest anyone who is listening to these debates gets the wrong impression, I think it ought to be spelled out pretty clearly here that the entrenchment of property rights in the Canadian Constitution in no way abrogates the rights of society to protect, maintain and promote a healthy environment.

Putting property rights in the Canadian Constitution is simply giving back to Canadians a right they had historically until 1982 when the Canadian Constitution was changed. I know there have been environmental activists who have been attempting to scare Canadians by saying if you give people the right to own property, surely you