

Private Members' Business

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Pursuant to Order made Wednesday, December 12, 1990, the division is deferred until Monday, December 17, at 7 p.m.

It being five o'clock p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper.

**PRIVATE MEMBERS'
BUSINESS—MOTIONS**

[English]

THE ENVIRONMENT

TROPICAL RAIN FORESTS

Mrs. Christine Stewart (Northumberland) moved:

That, in the opinion of this House, the government should develop a rainforest policy with specific guidelines ensuring that Canada will not finance, directly or indirectly, any development activities which may destroy or degrade tropical rainforests.

She said: Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to have the opportunity to speak to my motion with regard to our world's very fragile rain forests, their continued destruction, Canada's involvement in that process and some suggestions as to how the Government of Canada can prevent the continued destruction of our world's precious rain forests.

I have said many times when talking of environmental issues—and yesterday in this House in speaking to the government's green plan which it has brought in, which we all agree is a very vague paper presented to the Canadian public, that in many ways is toothless—that when it comes to discussing environmental issues, environment is one issue that knows no political borders.

If we pollute oceans, if we destroy rain forests, the effects of that degradation is felt, not just outside of the borders of Canada, but it is experienced and felt by Canadians as well. It influences our well-being as Canadians. Environmental destruction, wherever it occurs in the world, eventually affects the life and the lifestyle of others and Canadians.

When we talk about environmental destruction affecting our lifestyle, we have to realize that there can be negative effects to our lifestyle in terms of our own

health degradation. But also, we have to recognize that it is our lifestyle here in Canada which contributes to so much of the environmental degradation that occurs in the world. Certainly, that is the fact when it comes to the destruction of our world's tropical rain forests.

It was felt just a few years ago that tropical rain forests were disappearing from the face of the earth at the rate of 11 million hectares a year. In fact, evidence today suggests that we are losing our tropical rain forests at almost twice that rate. At least 16 to 20 million hectares of tropical rain forest are lost every year.

One of the problems that contributes to this is the fact that Canada and other developed nations around the world are major importers of tropical hardwoods. Europe and Japan dominate the world's consumption of tropical hardwoods, but Canada imports tropical hardwoods to the extent of \$120 million annually. Our primary imports of tropical hardwoods consist of plywoods and other wood-fabricated products, used in the construction industry and furniture-making industry. In Canada, our main source of imported tropical hardwoods is Indonesia. Indonesia and Malaysia alone account for more than half of hardwood log exports in the world. Throughout my comments I will give specific examples of the impact of the destruction of tropical rain forests.

The state of Sarawak in East Malaysia has the highest rate of logging in the world. Seven square kilometres of tropical rain forest are lost every day. At this rate, within seven to eight years, the rain forest of Sarawak will be logged out completely. Not only is this devastating to an enormously important ecological system, but also it brings about the result of destroying the homes of native persons who depend for their survival on eking out an existence in tropical rain forests.

Timber extraction methods currently used are 99 per cent unsustainable. Even selected and selective felling, in which only a few desirable species are extracted from tropical rain forests, happen to destroy up to 70 per cent of any forest. To date, the only people who are able to successfully harvest tropical hardwoods from rain forests are indigenous peoples, rubber tappers and, in Brazil, the nut gatherers who have demonstrated how to extract rain forest products without destroying the ecosystem at the same time.