

*Government Orders*

development so important and so politically attractive. It looks at the long term, the future.

Another principle is an operative one. In the application of this act everything within the power of the minister should be done to prevent climate change. Why? Because we know that climate change means also a change in our natural resources. It would mean a change in the location of agriculture. It would probably mean a shift toward the north of our forests. It could have a profound effect on our fisheries. It impacts on our natural resources. I cannot think of another principle as important for the Minister of Natural Resources than that of preventing climate change.

If we look at the policies of today, it is legitimate to ask ourselves: Are our energy policies sustainable? If we look at the way we spend our public funds in terms of energy, we find that for every dollar the Government of Canada spends to promote energy efficiency, it spends over \$100 in support of the fossil fuel industry. This support increases pollution and supports dependence on non-renewable resources. This support has a negative impact on climate change.

If we look at the 1990 accounts, the latest for which figures are available, what do we find? We find that the value of tax deductions by the oil and gas industry in Canada amounted to some \$5.8 billion. With these deductions the government lost some \$1.2 billion in revenue. The current expenditures by the Government of Canada to the energy sector are close to \$700 million. Of that amount only 5 per cent goes to research and development on alternative energy sources.

• (1710)

I do not need to stress the importance of research and development in alternative energy sources and the importance of changing our dependence in energy from non-renewable to renewable sources. Everybody knows that.

That means that under this act and the new minister's commitment to sustainable development it is desirable to have a profound shift in the department's budget. It should move rapidly from a budget on which the emphasis is on non-renewable to renewable sources of energy and should move more rapidly to the implementation of policies that reinforce and accelerate the movement toward more efficient use of energy.

I am not talking of a carbon tax, although we all know that one day the concept of a carbon tax will have to be tackled if we are serious about the question of climate change. However, the political moment has not yet arrived.

**An hon. member:** Thank god.

**Mr. Caccia:** Well, that may be an expression of relief for the present, but the chickens are coming home to roost sooner or later and we will have to cross that bridge at the proper time.

Moving into forestry, we can ask ourselves: Are our forest policies sustainable? This is a sector in which we must apply the concept of sustainability. There is a considerable debate in Canada on what constitutes a forest and a sustainable forestry. Is the volume of forest really the best indicator of the state of our forest resources, one can ask. Does increasing the cubic metre figures make up for loss of forest and species diversity? Is volume really the only criterion we should be examining? Or does the loss of area of old growth forest not represent an important factor if we think of future generations, if we think of biodiversity?

All of us know that one tree does not make a forest, of course. Today many Canadians and many regions of the world are undertaking alternative and sustainable forestry practices. In that respect British Columbia is a fascinating example of new ideas. All of us know there are alternatives to large cuts which destroy forests. There are much better alternatives to clear cutting. There are alternatives which would permit the protection of wildlife habitat. There are alternatives which would permit the retention of biodiversity.

Perhaps this is not the time nor the place to open the debate on clear cuts, especially when one has only 20 minutes. However, we know that our past performance with clear cuts has earned us a very bad reputation abroad.

If the purpose of the new department as it is spelled out in clause 6(f) on page 3 is to participate "in the enhancement and promotion of market access for Canada's natural resources products and technical surveys industries, both domestically and internationally" then we must pay very close attention to our forest practices. Those practices are being watched from abroad and our future export opportunities in forest products hinges on them.

• (1715)

In that respect, I would like to pay homage to the forestry code introduced last spring I believe by the Government of British Columbia. I want to express the hope that this forestry code will not only be given the necessary regulations soon but also the necessary funds to be enforced effectively because it is through measures of that kind that we can establish for Canada a good reputation abroad with respect to forestry practices.

We can also ask ourselves what is the role of the forest services of Canada. Is it one to perform only scientific research? Is it one to look for industrial opportunities only? Is it one that is also to give guidance and leadership in forest practices for the