

Private Members' Business

reduction of the waste of resources and the damage to the environment.

Private companies are scrambling to do this kind of thing in their own operations, because, as 3M has demonstrated, employees quickly rise to the challenge of finding innovative ways to cut the waste of both dollars and resources. The workplace then becomes another way to answer "what can I do about the environment?" Most importantly companies are hiring consultants at a great pace to say: How can you help us save money by saving on resources and saving the environment? They are becoming responsible for their environmental stewardship and they are finding they are saving a lot of money in the process. Why not the federal government?

The federal government must lead by doing and where better for that leadership to start than by Parliament giving government departments a clear message that they and everyone who works for government must take responsibility for the environment and must take responsibility for the waste of resources.

I am therefore seeking the support of members on all sides of the House in having this motion approved. I would like to conclude by saying that we have to legislate on the environment, and we have to sometimes force people to do the right thing. Here we have an opportunity to provide leadership, not just legislation.

Mr. Robert Wenman (Fraser Valley West): Mr. Speaker, I would like to commend the member for her initiative in the House of Commons on this very important environmental matter. The motion and the words we have just heard are certainly foremost in the progressive environmental thinking in Canada. Her initiative is correct, and at the right place at the right time.

• (1710)

Previous governments and this government have created a very large, strong body of environmental legislation, and that legislation is followed of course with regulations and standards. After the regulations and the standards, there is the implementation process.

Following the implementation process, I think we have too large a body of law in all fields because it is not necessarily fully employed and in force.

There will never be the employment or enforcement of new laws if there is not someone who has to provide accountability or some kind of an audit format. The audit format is something that is certainly coming to environmental law.

I remember in 1979 bringing before this House the first bill on compulsory environmental assessment. No one would even second the motion at that time because it was something that was still to come. Of course, I am very pleased that the House of Commons has passed compulsory environmental impact legislation now.

As I look back at that 1979 private members' bill that gave forward direction coming from the hon. member in her call for audit and accountability of legislation once it is passed.

I want the member to know that the government fully supports the concept of federal departments being accountable for their use of resources from the environmental perspective.

The green plan clearly emphasizes that every Canadian, each and every one of us, has a role to play in achieving the goal of sustainable development, that everyone is accountable for the impact of their actions as individuals on the environment. Therefore, it is only logical that in the green plan the federal government specifically acknowledged the need to demonstrate its commitment to sustainable development by making federal operations a model for that kind of development.

That was recognized even in the House of Commons by you, Mr. Speaker, in the fine work that you have done in bringing the House of Commons forward as an example of sustainable development in every way that all of us from the committee to the House of Commons could think of.

The government must lead by example. It can lead by advocating. It can lead by legislation. It can lead by programs, but first and foremost it must show the way by example. That example of course has to be followed with audit, otherwise it becomes relatively meaningless and people's initial enthusiasm soon wanes.

The government is committed to adopting a comprehensive code of environmental stewardship covering all areas of federal operations and activities. This code will integrate environmental concerns into both policy and