

*Adjournment Debate*

● (1830)

Whether or not a bird is an endangered species, the point is the Canadian Wildlife Service was the only agency that was there to protect the wildlife. The companies were not interested. The foresters were not all that interested, and the provincial governments were not all that interested. The pest control division of the Department of Agriculture did not require an analysis as part of the spraying program.

What do we have left, Minister? If all the cuts are allowed to take place and that type of thing happens, nobody will be looking out for the birds. Therefore, Minister, what you are saying in effect is that nobody is looking out for the people. As we all know, when the environment is destroyed people are destroyed. It is as simple as that. The birds I refer to in this particular instance perform a vital function. In some countries they put the emphasis on bird hatcheries, rather than on sprays.

It would be wonderful and in the spirit of Christmas if the Minister would announce now that the Canadian wildlife Service will be relieved of these absolutely vicious cuts imposed by the Minister of Finance. I could then praise her in the House during Question Period, under the provisions of Standing Order 21, as well as on points of order and in general discussions.

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Suzanne Blais-Grenier (Minister of the Environment):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his comments and I can assure you that if it were up to me, I would love to be honoured like this for a whole day, as it was certainly not the case in the House yesterday and today.

I also want to reassure the Hon. Member about the fact that my colleague, the Hon. Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson), did not force any cutbacks on me. I take the full responsibility for them, and it is I, with the officials at my Department, who reviewed the programs and decided, in accordance with our federal mandate and the responsibilities under our jurisdiction, to cancel certain programs and to make sure that some of them would be taken over by the provinces.

To give a more specific answer to my colleague, I can assure him that we are still concerned with peregrine falcons and

their reintroduction to the wild. We also continue to concern ourselves with the effect of pesticides on birds, for instance within the interdepartmental committee on the effects of pesticides on the environment, which is responsible for advising the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Wise) on the use of these pesticides.

I do not believe that it would be appropriate for me to speak too long about the cutbacks. Much has already been said about this. However, I want to say that these cutbacks affect the following occupational group: 10 science researcher and program manager positions, 50 professional or technical positions and 13 support positions; these are the only positions affected.

For some of them, we already have alternatives. I would like however to take a few moments to refer to the overall effort by my officials and myself to soften the impact of those cuts on the people concerned. Our surplus employees have been notified as early as possible of their status, so they may have an opportunity to find other jobs on the market place. We have put a freeze on hiring throughout the Department, and we will very soon complete the identification of all vacant jobs. Further, we will offer retraining programs, where appropriate, to help our employees relocate.

We have ongoing consultations with the provinces and the universities with the hope that some of the programs may be taken up by one of those jurisdictions.

Among other things, as a result of our diligent handling of the matter, we have succeeded in arranging the take-over of one of the five wildlife interpretation centres. We have in fact reached an agreement with the Province of British Columbia.

Mr. Speaker, it is my view that we have acted very humanely and within the spirit of our commitment made to Canadians to reduce Government expenditures.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Charest):** The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at eleven o'clock a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 2(1).

At 6.35 p.m. the House adjourned.