

Government Orders

Progressive Conservative Party who had that view of people who raised the question of the environment and that is the view that most of them still have. I believe that a few of them over there do not, but most of them still have that view, they have just learned how to talk differently while doing what they always wanted to do. And that is to have uncritical economic growth without regard to the environmental consequences.

You will recall, Madam Speaker, I hope, the story about how in the old days the miners used to take canaries down into the mine. The reason they had the canaries down in the mine was that when the canaries died they figured it was time to get out of the mine. It was a sign that the air was not fit to breathe and they would get out of there as fast as they could.

With respect to both the Canadian environment and the international environment, the canaries are dying all over the place. The canaries come in different forms. The canaries come in the form of beluga whales in the St. Lawrence River. The canaries come in the form of cod fish off Newfoundland that are disappearing. The canaries come in the form of fish in the Great Lakes that have weird tumors and other genetic and mutational problems. The canaries are dying all over. In fact, actual species are dying all over all the time.

Mr. Fulton: Twenty thousand a year.

Mr. Blaikie: The hon. member for Skeena said 20,000 a year. The canaries are dying all over the place and what is this government doing? They are kind of having lunch down in the mine debating about how they can dig deeper instead of reviewing the whole project, instead of saying—

Mr. Harvey (Edmonton East): They are eating the canaries.

Mr. Blaikie: Somebody said they are eating the canaries. But this is a very serious analogy. What the government is doing is not paying attention to all the signs around us that we are on the verge of a global, ecological catastrophe which will precipitate an economic catastrophe that will make all this blather about deficits look trivial.

The real deficit, the deficit that cannot be paid off if it is not paid off soon, is the environmental deficit. When you are constantly borrowing and not putting back clean air, clean water, fertile soil, trees that take hundreds of years to grow, you are building up a deficit and a deficit that cannot be paid back, a deficit that makes the fiscal deficit, which is the preoccupation of this government, morally insignificant. Yet, the government carries on as if it thinks it can carry on like this forever. The fact of the matter is that we cannot carry on like that.

All that this motion asks the government to do is to put aside lands that are already there. You do not have to stop any development that is already happening. These are lands that are there but do not, as yet, have the appropriate legal and institutional protection. You do not have to tear anything down. What does the government do? It opposes this motion and gets up, like the Minister of the Environment did, on an entirely spurious point of order and argues that the government cannot support this motion because it is a non-confidence motion.

We would like to make things easy for the government. We would like to move, and I so move, an amendment, that the motion be amended by adding, after the words "marine zone", the following:

"and, that for the purposes of clarification, this question not be considered a matter of confidence in the government."

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): I will take the amendment under advisement and come back to the House. I am not sure whether this amendment is in order or not.

A point of order, the hon. member for Winnipeg Transcona.

Mr. Blaikie: Madam Speaker, with respect, I do not think there is a lot to take under advisement. This is an amendment which is quite in order. Quite frankly, I do not see any reason why the Chair could not accept it at this point so we could proceed to debate the motion as amended.

Mr. Harvey (Edmonton East): Madam Speaker, I believe you would find, were you were to ask, that both the mover and seconder of the main motion are perfectly happy to have the motion as it is before the House, so amended.