

There is still time to save species and their ecosystems. It is an indispensable prerequisite for sustainable development. Our failure to do so will not be forgiven by future generations.

• (1210)

There is time to act and the costs are not great. I believe very recently was the anniversary of the minister taking on the most important portfolio in the country. Shortly after he assumed his portfolio some recommendations were given to him by the Canadian Arctic Resources Committee, the Canadian Nature Federation, the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, the Canadian Wildlife Federation, Ducks Unlimited, the Nature Conservancy of Canada, Wildlife Habitat Canada and World Wildlife Fund Canada. They are brief but I think they are very important to have on the record.

They said:

Despite substantial contributions by many government agencies over the past 100 years, the national network of protected areas is half finished at best. Canada has dedicated 6.3 per cent of the landscape to parks, wildlife areas and other nature reserves but only one-third of this is closed to resource exploitation. This is well short of the 12 per cent recommended by the Brundtland Commission. Only 21 of 39 terrestrial natural regions are represented by national parks and 3 of 29 marine natural regions are represented by marine national parks. Of 136 "Special Areas" identified in 1982 by Environment Canada as deserving protection in Canada's north, only 19 have been acted on. Only eight provinces or territories have park system plans to guide their contribution to the national network, and only four of these jurisdictions are more than halfway toward achieving their own park system goals. Canada is in danger of being identified as the "emperor with no clothes" by the international conservation community, especially given our opportunity as one of the last nations on earth with significant remaining wilderness.

I must interject at this point to remind members of the House, as David Suzuki reminded us a few days ago, that if we do not take action in this decade, in the year 2020 there will be no significant wilderness area left on the face of the earth. That is within the lifetimes of most of us sitting in this Chamber.

Canadians overwhelmingly support government leadership to get the job done. For example, a 1987 Gallup poll revealed that 96 per cent support government expenditures for wilderness protection and a 1981 Statistics Canada survey showed that Canadians spent \$4.2 billion on wildlife related activities during 1980 alone.

And that has continued to skyrocket upwards. Nine out of ten Canadians make some use of wilderness during each year for spiritual and other purposes.

### Supply

This broad support also manifests itself through focused public concern about specific sites such as South Moresby, the Saguenay Fjord and Toronto's Rouge River Valley.

By the reckoning of experts worldwide, the opportunity to complete the national network in Canada will all but vanish by the year 2000 as development and land use commitments overtake our last frontiers. This concern was emphasized by the Task Force on National Park Establishment in its 1987 report to the federal Environment Minister entitled *Parks 2000*.

Establishing protected areas need not be an expensive undertaking, especially if the goal is to reserve lands and waters primarily on Crown land over the next 10 years, leaving any "development" of services for the future. The important thing is to state clearly the conservation destiny of such lands and waters without further delay.

I know that I am running out of time, Madam Speaker. There are many more things I would like to touch on. Let me just conclude by saying how important I, personally, and I think all Canadians, take the vote that will occur at six o'clock on Monday. The completion of the national park system is possible. It is an objective that we must move toward. Setting aside 12 per cent of Canada requires the leadership of the federal government with the provinces, with the territories, with first nations, with conservation groups, with all Canadians of good will who want to see the ecosystems and species of this part of our planet fully protected for future generations.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne):** Questions or comments. The Hon. Member for Scarborough Centre.

**Mr. Fulton:** Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. There were discussions held earlier and I believe there is unanimous agreement in the House to hear the minister who has kindly stayed to participate in this important debate. He has another unbreakable commitment. If we could, perhaps sometime later at the convenience of the Chair have my ten-minute question period that would allow the minister to speak.

**Mr. Caccia:** Madam Speaker, we on this side of the House have agreed to that arrangement.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne):** If there is unanimous consent we will come back to the period for questions and comments later on.

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Minister of the Environment):** Madam Speaker, first of all I would like to sincerely thank my colleagues who have agreed to make this