

Minister of the Environment. Perhaps he would like me to dwell on that for a minute.

**Mr. Kilgour:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Since the Member is from Manitoba, he will know perfectly well that accuracy is important. He will know that my complaint was with respect to some information given to the Minister rather than about the Minister.

**Mr. Blaikie:** With all due respect, that is neither a point of order nor is it accurate. We know that the Hon. Member for Strathcona was complaining about certain judgments made by the Minister and certain information that she received. I did not want to dwell on that. If the Hon. Member wishes, we can spend some time discussing the deficiencies in the Government's wildlife program which he himself pointed out. I would rather talk about the fact that it may be preferable to have a Minister who indicates that she sees the decisions which she is making in her Department as relevant to a particular economic strategy which we disagree with, rather than to a long-term strategy for the environment. That may be preferable to the very high-sounding speeches on acid rain and a number of other topics that we so often got from the Liberals. Yet, whenever the crunch came, they were obedient to the same economic arguments, the same bureaucratic mentality, and the same limited view of the world to which the present Government appears to be obedient. There is a level of honesty over there which one can almost appreciate in a strange and ironic way.

Pollution is a political issue on two levels. The first, of course, is credibility. The personal concern for the environment of the Hon. Member for Davenport goes back to the days before he was Minister of the Environment. I remember reading his householders. He devoted a lot of time to that issue. I think the Hon. Member has some personal credibility on this issue. However, the Liberal Party, the Liberal Government, and this Member, is so far as he speaks for the Liberal Party, have no credibility in this area as far as I am concerned.

We now have a Private Member's Bill encouraging the Government to do something that the Member, as Minister of the Environment, could have done only months ago. We are not privy to the mysterious internal workings of the Liberal caucus, Cabinet and bureaucracy. It may be that the Member wanted to do that. Only when he has retired from politics and allows the archives to release his personal correspondence will we learn what he truly tried to do while he was Minister of the Environment. The record tells us that the Liberal Party did not do what it is now saying the present Government should do. The Government should do it now. It should show that it is different from the Liberals in this regard. I hope that that announcement will be forthcoming.

Pollution is also political to the extent that very difficult ideological questions are involved. We see here the limits to the small "I" liberal approach to politics. We are so used to politics, particularly in Canada and particularly through the agency of the Liberal Party, being the politics of brokerage and conflict solving. We have many groups that want different things. The role of Government is to manage that conflict and to ensure that every group gets a little piece of the action

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according to how much pressure it generates, how strong a lobby group it is, and various other elements of the political process as we have known it. There are limits to that kind of politics.

The acid rain issue does not belong to any identifiable group of people. We cannot point to a particular group of people that will be harmed if we do nothing about acid rain. These environmental questions apply to everyone. They apply to the health of society, the planet and the future as a whole. That is why I believe, with respect to this issue and others, that we are at the limits of liberal politics.

• (1750)

We can take another course, which is the one the Government has basically decided to take. Rather than try to manage the conflict, it is trying to subsume all of these issues under a larger and strictly economic context. While the Department of the Environment never was particularly strong, its role has become even more subservient to the fiscal strategies of the Government. As a result of the cut-backs to that Department, the environment is becoming simply a part of a larger economic package in which the right signals are being sent out to the private sector in order to create a certain investment climate.

I have spoken before about how that approach conforms with the larger package of signals that the Government is sending to the private sector, such as deregulation of the environment, postponement of Labour Code amendments and a willingness to cut social spending rather than strengthening tax reforms, as well as various other signals being sent out by the Government.

The Progressive Conservatives' approach to the environment is to make it subservient to the other economic goals and thereby postpone the inevitable day when the environmental questions will involve fundamental economic questions about what is at the root of our problems in this country with respect to productivity and profitability.

The Government is attempting to postpone that day of reckoning in the hope that it can entice the private sector to recreate the post-war economic boom and somehow recapture the fifties through the right economic signals. It is already clear that that will not happen.

I understand the Government's desire, but such an era has come and gone and will not return. We must begin to re-evaluate our views about the economy and the environment in such a way that they will finally come together.

One reason why I am a member of the New Democratic Party is that I do not believe that the questions of the environment can be solved within the context of the profit motive. I would not have anything to do with the Progressive Conservative Party because its world view does not permit it to deal with these kinds of problems.

It will be impossible to deal with these environmental questions as long as we are dominated by an economic philosophy that makes the intermediate and short-term profit needs of the