

views on precisely what the hon. member was speaking about. This group gave the government an *f* on this issue.

An hon. member: For fine.

Mr. Volpe: An *f*, as with a report card, because the process required for projects under federal jurisdiction obviously does not meet even the minimum requirements.

[*Translation*]

The French-Canadian press describes the bill as follows: "This legislation is well intentioned, but lacks teeth".

[*English*]

Mr. Speaker, when one reads these kinds of reports from environmentalists about whether the legislation has teeth and whether the proposed law is, in effect, attacking what it ought to be attacking, one begins to wonder. The hon. member for Terrebonne has talked at great length about the involvement of the public and the importance of gathering public opinion. I do not want to introduce an element of cynicism into a debate that should be of interest to all Canadians but, frankly, we have seen public input discarded by the wayside without much ado. We have seen it on the GST and all kinds of other things. We have seen, for example, closure imposed on debates at a very minor whim.

Mr. Speaker, it is very difficult for us on this side of the House to understand and appreciate the enthusiasm that the hon. member for Terrebonne has for the whole public inquiry process that is going to be implemented through Bill C-78. But, lest I be too critical, what I want to do is draw the attention of the House to the fact that this bill should have had underlined, as its main purpose, in fact its *raison d'être*, that it would foster sustainable development, and it would do that through a particular process which is indicated in the title of the bill and that is, "an act to establish the federal environmental assessment process".

When I look at this legislation, and I keep these very minor considerations in mind, I am already calling into question in my own thoughts whether in fact we are missing an opportunity. And the opportunities that we are missing with this legislation are precisely those which have been indicated by the coalition of environmentalists.

[*Translation*]

This is legislation without teeth.

[*English*]

It is, in fact, legislation without teeth.

The government has called us into question on many occasions, saying: "Give us alternatives, give us positive suggestions, give us an indication, critique, and be positive in the support of any legislation that might come forward." Well, members of my caucus have already introduced an element of criticism in this debate that has been positive and in that positive criticism they have also pointed out, as the environmental coalition group, has pointed out that there are very few, very effective enforcement mechanisms that would encourage the various departments to initiate proper assessment.

We have seen in both a question and answer, as well as in other debates, that this is a very crucial element of legislation. If it is going to have teeth then we have to see that mechanism in place. We have to be able to see it function in order to appreciate it, and the public has got to develop its confidence by seeing those elements in place.

I know that my colleague from Témiscamingue talked about the anarchy that prevails in the kind of industrial development in the sector of Quebec from where he comes. He says it would not have happened over the course of the last hundred years if we had had this.

Well, I am not sure whether he is infusing his own optimism in this, but we are certainly not going to be able to turn back the clock. The idea would be to put in place something that would ensure that under no circumstances would we have any ways out. He is from an area that is very dependent on the kind of industry that is by his own admission degrading the environment, and if he can see that what is required is some effective mechanism for ensuring that there be sustainable development, then surely he would have tried to encourage his own caucus to accept the kinds of mechanisms that needed to be put in place.

He will remember that since 1984 the courts have ruled that, whenever there have been questions on the environment, every minister and every agent of government was required—and I stress the word "required"