

petition an acknowledgment of receipt of the petition and shall send a copy of the acknowledgment to the Auditor General.

(3) The Minister shall consider the petition and send to the person who made it a reply that responds to it, and shall send a copy of the reply to the Auditor General, within

(a) one hundred and twenty days after the day on which the Minister receives the petition from the Auditor General; or

(b) any longer time, when the Minister personally, within those one hundred and twenty days, notifies the person who made the petition that it is not possible to reply within those one hundred and twenty days and sends a copy of that notification to the Auditor General.

(4) Where the petition is from more than one person, it is sufficient for the Minister to send the acknowledgment and reply, and the notification, if any, to one or more of the petitioners rather than to all of them.

• (1620)

I would have much more to say on petitions, Madam Speaker, but you are signalling that my time is up.

To sum up, I would like to say this. We will be voting against this bill for very specific reasons, in spite of the fact that we had originally requested a position of commissioner to the environment be established.

The auditor general tells us his basic problem is that he does not believe that he will be able to fulfil this mandate adequately. He also tells us that the government's leadership in this matter is more important than his. And so far, on every issue—whether it is the *Irving Whale* or the Berlin agreements on greenhouse effect—the Minister of the Environment has failed to show the leadership required to allow us to believe with any degree of certainty that the commissioner of the environment would have any real power.

Third and last, I note also the very clear picture that my colleague the hon. member for Laurentides has painted for us in her quite accurate analysis of clause 21.1, which does invade areas of provincial jurisdiction.

[English]

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu):** It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the question to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment is as follows: the hon. member for Brampton—unemployment.

**Mr. Boudria:** Madam Speaker, the speakers on this bill from here on in will speak pursuant to Standing Order 43(2). In other words, they will be sharing their time.

**Mr. Peter Adams (Peterborough, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I am truly delighted to rise to speak in support of Bill C-83, an act to amend the Auditor General Act. This act will create for Canada a commissioner for the environment and sustainable development.

I am particularly delighted in this case because this is a clear example of us fulfilling a commitment we made to Canadians in the red book, which was the basis of our election campaign. We

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said then that we would move Canada toward sustainable development. This bill is a very concrete step in that direction.

In the red book we recognized that there is no separation between a national environmental agenda and a national economic agenda. Since assuming office we have tried to implement that belief wherever possible. We have implemented it in our approach to planning and decision making within government. We have tried to integrate economic matters, social matters and environmental considerations. We understand that all these aspects of sustainable development can and must be co-ordinated to give Canadians what they want: a prosperous and healthy country in which we, our children, and our children's children can work to achieve our aspirations.

Environmental sustainable development must be an integral part of decision making in all federal departments. That means that decisions on new policies, programs, regulations, and laws as well as decisions on existing ones, must take that into account. It also includes decisions on how departments manage their buildings, facilities, and operations.

Strategies of sustainable development are a key part of Bill C-83. These strategies will take sustainable development from a concept to a real practice across all federal departments. Each minister will be required to table a sustainable development strategy for his or her department in the House within two years of the coming into force of this legislation.

By legal definition, sustainable development strategies must be results oriented. Each strategy will include the department's objectives and plans of action to obtain those objectives. Every minister will in fact become a sustainable development minister.

We all now realize that sustainable development is not the sole responsibility of the environment minister. It is the responsibility of all ministers and indeed of us all as Canadians. As the parliamentary secretary said earlier, in an ideal world we would not need a Ministry of the Environment to monitor sustainable development in Canada because it should be the concern of all of us and of all ministries.

• (1625)

These departmental strategies will also assist the new environmental and sustainable development commissioner in monitoring and reporting on the government's performance. The stated objectives and action plans will serve as meaningful and measurable benchmarks against which to assess each department's performance in making the shift to sustainable development.

Departments are committed to developing their sustainable development strategies and establishing their goals and action plans in an open manner, working with all interested parties.