

In sharp contrast to that, Sir, the Brundtland report says what is really needed is strong national standards enforced on a national basis. In my view, that is what Canada desperately needs and that is borne out of the kind of federalism that we are gradually negotiating away day by day.

I want to conclude by pointing out that the Parliamentary Secretary made the argument earlier today that this was a tough piece of legislation, the toughest we have ever seen. I want to quote from *The Financial Post*, an article by Doug Hunter who says:

The Canadian Environmental Protection Act, tabled in Parliament on June 26, talks tough, with million-dollar-a-day fines against polluters and provisions for jailing executives of offending companies. CEOs probably won't be marching off to jail in leg irons, though, unless their pollution is accompanied by such gross misbehaviour as fraud, obstruction of inspectors or the death of innocent bystanders.

Environmentalists criticize the act for its failure to set broad national standards, particularly for water quality.

"It's Swiss cheese with fewer holes," says Toby Vigod, a lawyer and clinic director of the Canadian Environmental Law Association. "If I was in industry, I wouldn't be particularly perturbed. It's not going to affect day-to-day business."

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Questions and comments.

Mrs. Browes: Mr. Speaker, I want to say a few words in response to what the Hon. Member said concerning Bill C-74. He mentioned the Brundtland report. That report was prepared by a committee chaired by Prime Minister Brundtland of Norway. We were very pleased with it. Indeed, this House unanimously endorsed it a few months ago.

The Minister set up a task force of environment Ministers which met as recently as the last two days in Quebec City. That task force was set up five months after the World Commission on Environment and Development warned that environmental problems on this planet are approaching crisis levels. Our task force was to respond to that report as it looks at how the world is going to have to view environmental issues. I would like to quote from a *Globe and Mail* article of yesterday which said:

Mr. MacNeill, who was secretary-general to the Brundtland commission, said no other country is as advanced as Canada in dealing with the recommendations of the world commission.

Not only are we getting recognition from around the world for our outstanding contribution in this area, let us look specifically at the acid rain abatement programs which the Member talked about. We have made an outstanding contribution in reducing acid rain. We have reached agreements on reducing sulphur dioxide emissions. We are getting our House in order. We are now into very difficult negotiations with the U.S., but we heard on the floor of this House the President of the United States talking about an accord on this issue. Just last week we had the Montreal protocol on the ozone. Our Minister of the Environment took a very strong leadership position in getting that protocol. We have produced automobile emission standards which will lead to the phasing out of

leaded gasoline. Indeed, there are many other examples which show the great accomplishments of this Government in cleaning up the environment.

Bill C-74 is another example. We are looking at chemicals coming on to the market, controlling those chemicals, producing priority lists, and putting teeth in the legislation in the form of penalties for those who pollute the environment. I think we should congratulate the Government on its fine work.

Mr. Penner: Mr. Speaker, you will know, as I do, that there is a world of difference between setting up a task force on a report which is as significant, useful and pointed as the Brundtland report is, and actually carrying out recommendations. One of the recommendations in the Brundtland report is that a nation requires a central authority for pollution control. If you decentralize pollution legislation and control and authority, the chances of getting effective pollution law and action is diminished. That is one of the messages in the Brundtland report.

When the Government tells us it has accepted that report and is going to take its responsibilities seriously, that we are going to have effective environmental protection law, then we will sit up and pay attention. However, when the Parliamentary Secretary talks about another task force we on this side are not very convinced.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Is the House ready for the question?

• (1250)

Mr. Cyril Keeper (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, you asked whether the House was ready for the question. We on this side of the House are certainly not ready for the question. I am a little surprised that Members of the Government did not take the opportunity to enter this debate. I am surprised that they are not sufficiently concerned about environmental matters to elaborate upon the policies that the Government has chosen to legislate.

They reacted in a very negative way to the critical comments made by my colleague to my right. They reacted very defensively when he criticized the inadequacies of the legislation before the House. They reacted to his criticisms with a minute-long question. I would have appreciated a much more extensive and thorough response. I would have appreciated the comprehensive and in-depth debate which is required.

This Chamber is set up with the Opposition on one side of the room and the Government on the other. That encourages adversarial discussions which have merit. However, in addition to the Opposition blaming the Government and the Government advertising its own merits we need a thorough and profound debate on environmental questions. I invite members of the Government to enter that debate. I invite them to share with the public the thinking, if any, that they have done on environmental questions.