

*Government Orders*

When he talks about the way that cabinet works as opposed to an individual member, all members in this House would do well to pay heed.

The amendments he has brought forth are the fruit of a lengthy experience and it is indeed pretty heart-warming for me as a member of this House to see those opinions expressed here.

**Mr. Lee Clark (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of the Environment):** Mr. Speaker, there are two or three points I would like to make in response to other comments made in the House.

First of all, I would like to thank the hon. member for Davenport for his continued practice of speaking very specifically to the issue at hand.

I would also like to make specific comments to Motions Nos. 11 and 18. With respect to Motion No. 11 my hon. friend for The Battlefords—Meadow Lake read clause 17(1) which relates to a minister's power in the process of delegation.

The first thing that must be stressed lest anyone watching perhaps misunderstands is that the responsible authority in the end of course is left with the decision-making authority. That is the ultimate power.

Although there is provision in the bill whereby responsible authority may enter into arrangements to delegate part of the screening or comprehensive study, including the preparation of that material to a provincial body or body set up under the lands claims agreement or any other self-governing agreement, what is clear is that the responsible authority in the end is left with the decision-making process. I think that is as all of us would wish.

It is also important to note in clause 17(2) because my hon. friend read all of clause 17(1), but in clause 17(2) in the proposed legislation it says "for greater certainty a responsible authority shall not take a course of action pursuant to subsection 20(1), or 37(1) which relates to decision-making power unless it is satisfied that any duty or function delegated pursuant to subsection 1 has been carried out in accordance with this act and the regulations".

In other words what is very clear is the responsible authority, the relevant minister, does indeed have the

power to ensure that any part of the process that has been delegated has been done so in accordance with the act and in accordance with the regulations.

It is for that reason that I would suggest to you that the proposed Motion No. 11 of the hon. member for Davenport is not necessary.

With respect to Motion No. 18 which refers to clause 37(1) in the bill, I would note and perhaps it will be recalled from previous debates, that part of the philosophy in this legislation is indeed the principle of self-assessment. It is an important principle and perhaps it is one which is not fully understood.

Part of the principle of self-assessment is indeed to accept the fact that all those who might have a responsibility pertaining to the environment are required to accept that responsibility. There have been times during the hearings when this was questioned.

The concept of self-assessment is important because it is saying really that one cannot ask any one individual, any one minister, to become in a sense a superpower.

The philosophy indeed is that this is a responsibility which must be shared by all participants, not just by all ministers within the federal government, present or future. What is consistent within the legislation is the realization that it must also be shared by other jurisdictions, and in a sense by way of implication it says by Canadians everywhere. The reason I think this principle is important is that it must be clearly understood that government alone cannot be held accountable for the protection of the environment. It is a responsibility that must go far beyond the Chamber, the cabinet or future cabinets to other jurisdictions, to Canadians everywhere.

I would also note that there is an important aspect of accountability in this process. We must remember that as politicians we are accountable for each and every one of our actions. Clauses 22 and clauses 36 to 38 provide for the publication of reports and the justification for not following the recommendation of those reports.

What is clear is there is a direct line between the decision-making part of government, irrespective of which responsible authority that might be, back to the public at large. I think that line is very important. It is a line which must be maintained.