deal with two administrations instead of one. The only acceptable administration is that of the province concerned.

• (1650)

In this regard, the mining industry is very worried about possible delays in processing mining licence applications. Decisions already take too long—often more than one year—and jeopardize projects because of the amounts involved that must be frozen over long periods of time, thus reducing profitability.

For example, the Grevet mining project in my riding, which involves potential investments exceeding $100 million, was put in great jeopardy by the wait for the mining licence, in particular for the environmental permit. This example shows that Bill C–48, by failing to recognize provincial predominance, opens the door to interference that could seriously harm the industry, thus endangering jobs we all need.

The federal government knows that the provinces have long had their own natural resources strategies. The provinces already carry out environmental assessments of projects, and the process that the federal government wants to put in place will increase overlap and duplication. The federal government refuses to recognize the provinces' legitimate rights; its assessment and review process is outrageous. It will cost everyone very dearly and will continue to do so if we do not find ways to have a "single window" where industry will be able to obtain information and where the projects will be accepted in as little time as possible.

Unfortunately for the industry, which wants to be efficient and profitable, the federal government has new requirements. It wants new regulations. It wants more projects to be subject to a thorough review. Clearly, this means a waste of time and money, confusion and long delays in approving and implementing these projects.

As an aside, I would like to give a specific example of the slowness of government bureaucracy, in particular in the Department of National Health and Welfare, to which I wrote on May 24, 1994 on behalf of several of my constituents; I received a reply only on October 27, 1994. If it took five months for a department to answer something relatively simple, Mr. Speaker, imagine the delays that more complex issues, like environmental assessments, will involve.

In the present economic environment, we must streamline, and Bill C–48 would have been a good chance to do that. Increasing the number of structures and the amount of duplication must stop before it is too late. In our work on the parliamentary committee studying Bill C–48, we could with simple amendments have made several clauses reflect the provinces' primary jurisdiction over their natural resources.

For example, in clause 5 on the powers, duties and functions of the Minister of Natural Resources, it would have been enough to say that these powers, duties and functions are subject to the principle of provincial predominance in the field of natural resources. This would not have reduced the powers, duties and functions of the minister, but it would have reasonably put them in relation to provincial priorities.

As regards clause 7, the Bloc Quebecois wanted an annual report to be tabled by the minister, so as to make her department accountable for its mandate and objectives. In his most recent report tabled yesterday, the Auditor General of Canada states clearly, on page 8 of the booklet on main points: "7.1 Two years ago we called for government to reform its departmental reporting to be more transparent. We suggested that Parliament should expect and receive a regular accounting for the exercise of the entire business of government: in a phrase, global stewardship. This year, we continue this theme of transparency by following up on our 1992 Report, and extend it to the sectoral activities of government".

"7.4 We believe that there should be better sectoral reporting. This means that when a sectoral activity is identified, one department has to be given the lead responsibility to provide a summary–level report to Parliament for the entire sector".

I should point out, Mr. Speaker, that we did not ask for an extensive report: we simply wanted an internal report on the quality of services.

Here is one last excerpt from the Auditor General's report: "7.5 But in the end, reporting of any kind will not change soon unless Parliament is explicit in letting government know that current reporting is inadequate and that it wants it changed". The Auditor General's report seems to confirm that it was not such a bad idea to ask that Bill C–48 be amended so that a clear and concise report be submitted at least once a year.

• (1655)

It was certainly legitimate to table this amendment so that parliamentarians and Canadians could monitor the usefulness and the efficiency of the programs developed by the Department of Natural Resources.

As regards clause 27 of Bill C–48, we wanted the minister to have the authority to enter into agreements only with the provinces and not with any person or body of her choice, since only the provinces can define their policy on natural resources. Clearly, overlapping and duplication could resurface if, for some reason, the minister decided to promote a specific policy.

Finally, clause 35 of Bill C–48 not only suggests overlapping and duplication but also federal interference in a field of provincial jurisdiction, as stated in the Canadian Constitution.

Indeed, through clause 35, the minister is giving herself the power to enter into agreements with any person or body in a province, without that province having any say. As I mentioned earlier, the issue is not the quality of the federal government's action. The member who spoke just before me noted that it is sometimes necessary to have a national policy as, for example, in the case of nuclear energy. No province has a concrete