

*Government Orders*

We have a lot of examples that we need to confirm the need for a bill like this. We have of course, and this has been mentioned many times, the Oldman River dam project. The environmental assessment that should have been triggered and was not would have saved so many dollars, so much confusion and so many problems that have now gone on with a project like that. It has demonstrated and caused a confrontation rather than co-operation.

We must avoid duplication. It emphasizes we must have provincial co-operation and third parties involved rather than just through the courts of law.

Federal-provincial duplication is enormous. This is one area this bill does not address adequately that I would like to see possible amendments to. We must resolve these federal-provincial problems. That is essential with getting on with the job.

I use an example of a company in my constituency. I have a letter from the Alberta environmental minister, Brian Evans, in which he says: "I can assure you that the issue of duplication overlap is at the top of the agenda for Canadian ministers of the environment". He goes on to say that the agreement that Alberta has signed will go a long way to help solve the problem.

An Alberta government document goes on to state: "This agreement will greatly reduce the burden placed on industry because of a dual regulatory framework. From now on the Alberta government will be the primary representative in dealing and contacts with the pulp and paper industry". He goes on to describe other industries. He continues: "The establishment of a single window at the provincial level does not relieve industry from the obligation to comply with federal regulations. Each level of government retains its respective legislative powers and can take legal action against defenders". While it has moved some way it has not moved all the way.

I will go on with some examples and look at some of the background where this harmonization just has not occurred. One thing I would like to stress here today is that we must get the harmonization of this environmental assessment program. I think all sides would agree. I am disappointed to hear some of the dissenters to that whom we have heard from today.

I would also list four items that have been identified for me in my constituency. There is a big problem with reports between provincial and federal governments. There is a great variation between what they are asking for and yet they end up getting to the same place.

Second, there is a real perception that business is doing something wrong and that they are always doing something wrong. The lack of co-operation where one government does

not trust the other one has to be alleviated. We must get away from the idea that in fact industry cannot pay for and be involved in some of this analysis. We also must look at the regulations to be sure they are realistic. Again, I have many examples of where unrealistic legislation is in place in terms of environment.

● (1850)

The duplication of regulations has played havoc with particularly smaller oil companies. I can summarize some of this by listing four major areas. The purpose of most regulations is reasonable. However they become ridiculous when the administration of the regulations and the people involved begin to protect their own turf and refuse to be reasonable or co-operate with the other branches of government for fear of losing their power. Again we have many examples of that.

We must also be concerned about their competitiveness within Canada. The number of reports keeps increasing which greatly handicaps smaller companies. Having one extra person to complete reports in a plant involving 10 people is quite a bit different than adding one person in a company of 500. We must consider that. We must keep these companies competitive.

I quote an example from one of my constituents: "In the early 1980s I was closely involved with the major grassroots complex being built close to Fort Saskatchewan in Alberta. Over a period of two and a half years the company had to make a total of 4,200 submissions, permits and other formal requests from every conceivable government branch in three layers of government. Many of the pieces of information was repeated many times over because a given permit could only be issued for 30 days. If we informed one level that the same information was sent two months ago to, say, the federal environmental group we were told that confidentiality prevented moving information between departments and the same information would have to be submitted in the new format requested".

At the end of the project a complete listing of the total number was sent to the Alberta economic development department for review because no one could believe the number and they were dismayed and shocked by the number of reports. We must address that. We must do something about that. We are literally putting small business out of business because of environmental regulations and no co-operation between levels of government. It is reasonable then. We must deal with this. We must address this problem.

Going on, the lack of co-operation seems to go on and on. I will not get into all of this because I intend to deal with another subject. What we must do is end the duplication, the lack of co-operation, the protecting of different departments' turf that goes on in this whole area of environmental testing.