

*Private Members' Business*

It is this lack of consultation that I am concerned about. The structures are not there. The Islands Trust does not have the resources to be able to withstand this kind of pressure. I know today that we are talking about the anchorages surrounding the Gulf Islands but this example shows the kind of vulnerability that exists on the Gulf Islands.

The growth and the pressure on these islands have increased a hundredfold since the Islands Trust was first created by the former New Democratic government led by the member for Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca. We cannot allow this kind of violation of those structures to continue if people are going to have faith in the system.

I have spoken a number of times in this House about the kind of public cynicism people have about their political systems. It is this type of activity that feeds that cynicism. If we are going to try to represent our constituents we have to be able to demonstrate to them that the system works. In this instance it is not working. Those residents are feeling a very real and justified sense of violation.

Let me turn to the environmental assessment process itself. This process has been thoroughly examined in this Parliament. We have examined Bill C-13. It is supposed to give the government the tools with which to assess any project that falls within federal jurisdiction or has a federal component to it like the tower on North Pender Island or considerations with regard to fisheries and oceans of any tanker or freighter anchorage within those Gulf Islands.

However Bill C-13 has yet to be proclaimed. We are all a little puzzled as to why that is when it was received with such heated debate when it was originally passed. What is the government waiting for? We have asked the Minister of the Environment on a number of occasions why he has not yet proclaimed Bill C-13, the environmental assessment act.

We are now in a no man's land, a grey area in which we have to fall back on the old guidelines of the environmental assessment review process. Those guidelines have been examined by many who care about the Gulf Islands and they are adequate for protecting them. They

do not necessarily trigger as quickly as Bill C-13 but they are adequate to protect the islands.

We have to strengthen and reinforce the environmental assessment review process. Right now it is under a cloud because it does not seem that the Minister of the Environment is supportive of it.

• (1710)

We have seen many examples of such lack of support for that process. We have seen it in the very sad state of affairs with regard to the fixed link in Prince Edward Island. We have seen it with regard to the Rafferty-Alameda Dam. In a number of instances it has been given very short shrift by the authorities. The environmental assessment process must be strengthened.

I would like to turn to the focus of the motion, and that is the anchorages of ships within the Gulf Islands waters. For those not fortunate enough ever to have been to the Gulf Islands let me just describe them. They are a string of islands lying between the mainland of British Columbia and Vancouver Island. They are things of beauty. The people on these islands have very strong community feelings. They are also working communities where people make their living in a sustainable way. When people live on an island they have a very clear knowledge of the finite nature of resources.

For instance, there is water. On the main island a few years ago a well could reach water at 60 or 70 feet but they are now drilling as far down as 300 feet. That is a lesson in the finite nature of the water resource. Islanders have a very emotional attachment to the communities in which they live and they know the kind of fragility that their communities suffer from.

It is not a bad thing. People have to become environmentally aware if they are going to live on an island. The world is the island. We are all on an island. I have seen a T-shirt that says: "If you throw it out, it stays here", with regard to garbage. Islanders know that. They do not have landfill sites so they have to recycle, reuse, and reduce which we in bigger cities do not necessarily attend to quite so well.

The ship and freighter anchorages within the Gulf Islands region are a cause for increasing concern among island residents and I think among all of us. Bill C-121 is now before the legislative committee. I know my colleague from Victoria will be addressing some aspects of this motion as it relates to Bill C-121, which is an