

*Government Orders*

strong and courageous statement. That assessment, unfortunately, is accurate. It is true.

I submit to you that if in this Bill C-13, not the proposing minister, but the entire cabinet were to be made responsible for that decision then these incidents to which my colleague from Western Arctic refers would not likely happen or would be much less likely to take place in Canada. This is the relevance of her statement in the context of the debate here today. I really applaud her statement because it is dead on.

Yesterday, we talked about the enormous loophole in clause 37. I must say that reality is with us now. It is not good to have a bill in which the minister can proceed even in the knowledge that significant adverse environmental effects could be the consequences. Therefore, the project can be justified in the circumstances. This obviously gives a strong political stamp of approval which should not have been allowed to be given. It is not good legislation from that point of view and it is unfortunate because it weakens the credibility of the bill.

I refer also to the review of the legislation after five years. As you know, we debated that point earlier. We had three different approaches to it. They all focused on how, five years from now, we should examine the good and bad features of the bill and make recommendations.

The compromise solution of the government that emerged is silent on the fact whether or not the public will be a participant in it. Let us hope that the minister of the day will include public participation in the process very early, rather than leaving it to the discretion of the minister.

I would like to make a reference to the collective responsibility but I would be repetitive on that because I think I stressed the point, too much perhaps. As to the delegation of responsibility, giving authority to an agency or an individual or a body to carry out an assessment, the bill is silent as to whether the minister can revoke such authority. But on that I must say the parliamentary secretary yesterday gave a very thorough and convincing reply.

In conclusion, and making sure that one does not become repetitive, I would say that we have here a measure that does establish a federal environmental assessment process. It claims to be within the intellectual

framework of sustainable development. Unfortunately I cannot see it that way.

I hope that despite the weaknesses of the bill, the purposes set out in clause 4 will be implemented not only in the letter but also in the spirit. I hope that the loopholes will not turn out to be as large as they seem to us to be at this stage.

It will be good to have this legislation proclaimed as soon as possible so that we will be able, in 1997, to review it and draw from the lessons of the five years the conclusions that are necessary to make it a truly sustainable development measure.

[*Translation*]

**Madam Deputy Speaker:** It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Scarborough—Rouge River—Human Rights; the hon. member for Don Valley East—Shipbuilding; the hon. member for Bonavista—Trinity—Conception—Fisheries; the hon. member for Drummond—Cross-border shopping; and the hon. member for Prince George—Bulkley Valley—Lumber industry.

[*English*]

**Mr. Len Taylor (The Battlefords—Meadow Lake):** Madam Speaker, as has been said at report stage, the environmental assessment bill before us today is the single most important piece of environmental legislation ever to face this country.

The bill represents a significant step forward from the existing environmental assessment legislation under EARP. It reflects a great number of changes presented not only by myself and my New Democratic colleagues but also members of the environmental community as well.

The bill is not perfect. We said that at report stage. It is not the bill that we would write if we were on the other side of the House. It is not the bill that I would write if I were the Minister of the Environment, and it is not the bill that I would expect if my colleague from Skeena were the Minister of the Environment in a New Democratic Party government.

Some of the problems with it are not known and will only be discovered through years of working with the new law.