

Private Members' Business

tunity to participate fully in the establishment of water quality objectives and monitoring programs.

As a representative from Manitoba, I applaud the private member's motion which calls for the reform of the federal environmental assessment review process. It is imperative, as the motion states, that a compulsory environmental impact assessment legislation be instituted to fully protect the Canadian environment through the institution of a mandatory environmental impact assessment procedures which would allow for assessments prior to the construction of installations, public or private of projects which may prove to be potentially damaging to the environment.

At the present time, the citizens of Winnipeg are facing an environmental issue which has a potential effect on their drinking water. A proposed gold mine and other recreational developments at Shoal Lake in Ontario, a primary source of drinking water for the city of Winnipeg, have created fear that these activities may have an adverse effect on the city's drinking water.

Under the present environmental assessment and review process, the processed gold mine, being primarily an issue between two provinces, may not have to undergo a mandatory federal government environmental assessment review process.

However, there have been negotiations between Manitoba, Ontario and Ottawa to ensure that this situation be dealt with properly. This resulted in a statement by the federal Minister of the Environment in June that a full environmental assessment of the proposed Shoal Lake gold mine will be conducted before any licence is issued. I think it is important to note that these negotiations were voluntary on the part of the provinces.

I urge the government to establish more clearly defined ways to mesh the procedure of the EARP guidelines with the procedures of other agencies and jurisdictions so that all participants in the reform process will know the rules in advance. Then the federal departments and provincial governments, industry and environmental groups will know both their rights and their responsibilities. The goal of this motion is to clarify the current uncertainty among all levels of government so that in future, duplications can be minimized. Both time and taxpayers money will be saved.

In conclusion, the key element in any environmental assessment process is the opportunity for governmental and public participation early in the planning of a major development. We will improve the management of Manitoba's environment and Canada's environment by bringing forward legislation which requires an environmental assessment of all federal policies and projects. Finally, we will enhance the government's strength and credibility when all sectors of society know that they may actively participate in the assessment of proposals that may adversely affect their environment.

Mr. Rey Pagtakhan (Winnipeg North): Mr. Speaker, I am indeed pleased to speak in support of this motion introduced by the hon. member for Fraser Valley West and seconded by the hon. member for Davenport, providing that the government should consider introducing legislation to fully protect the Canadian environment through the institution of mandatory environment impact assessment procedures which would allow for assessments prior to the installations, public or private, of projects which may prove to be potentially damaging to the environment.

Before addressing the motion specifically, I would like to speak on a broader level about the need to protect the environment. The state of the environment, especially the rate at which it changes, is of fundamental importance to a nation's long-term well-being. Canadians have benefited greatly from Canada's vast natural resources. Forests, fisheries, agriculture, fur-bearing animals and minerals have been the backbone of Canada's economic development.

But the desire for continuous improvements in the economic standard of living has not, until recently, been accompanied by a sufficient awareness of some serious adverse environmental effects of economic development. As prominent environmentalist, David Suzuki, points out, economic growth has become an end in itself, "a mindless goal that is sought by every country in the world and the very measure of progress". We must reverse this insane idea that growth is of vital necessity if we really want to preserve something for future generations, to meet their needs, the essence of sustainable development.