

*We are committed to maintaining a strong federal role in the environment and continuing to be a leader in achieving sustainable development, both nationally and internationally.*<sup>6</sup>

*My advice to you [the Committee] is that whatever course you take, whatever philosophical or ideological predisposition might be brought to bear on your own deliberations, you not lose sight of the fact that the federal authority cannot be compromised; it must be exercised. The issues are increasingly ones of planetary survival, whether the planet is going to be here in a generation or so.*<sup>7</sup>

2.6 There should be no “soft centre” at the heart of the federal government’s environmental policy and action. Though responsibility must inevitably be shared—with aboriginal groups, municipal governments, the private sector and individual Canadians as well as with provincial and territorial governments—environmental protection and the shift to sustainable development patterns will require all jurisdictions to exercise their environmental authority to the fullest extent possible.

2.7 When we seek to define in more detail the limits of the federal government’s environmental powers, or to define the appropriate roles of each of the main participants in environmental action, we naturally begin with the traditional notion of provincial governments as best able to deal with local concerns, and the federal government as bearing the primary responsibility for environmental issues that have national or international dimensions. That view is evidently shared by the majority of witnesses, for example, Mr. Jack MacLeod, President and CEO of Shell Canada, and a member of the National Round Table on Environment and Economy:

*I suggest that the model for evolution of Canada’s shared jurisdictional environmental management that has served us relatively well to the present has been one that has recognized two basic values: first, that the provincial jurisdiction, being the closest to the community, is the most logical jurisdiction to exercise prime authority and accountability for environmental management related to developments within the communities of the province; and second, that management of environmental impacts related to developments within a province that in fact reach beyond provincial boundaries, whether to other provinces or to other countries, must be subject to the authority and accountability of the federal jurisdiction.*<sup>8</sup>

This view was echoed by Pollution Probe and the Canadian Environmental Law Association (see para. 1.23).

2.8 Witnesses, however, recognized that in the contemporary world the distinction in principle may be hard to draw in practice. Mr. MacLeod:

*I see it virtually impractical to think that any major project in any industrial sector should logically be left solely to the jurisdiction of the provinces. I think that the federal and the provincial jurisdiction, on a project by project basis, can work out and commit to accords what respective roles they play in regard to any single major project. . .*

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<sup>6</sup> Issue 15, p. 6.

<sup>7</sup> Issue 6, p. 32.

<sup>8</sup> Issue 10, p. 6.