

Government Orders

well beyond the boundaries of one district or one province.

In clause 4 of the bill, the purpose of the bill is expressed in the manner that it justifies the kind of amendment I submit. There is a collective responsibility that ought to be discharged by the entire cabinet and not only by the proposing minister, including the Prime Minister. In doing so, I submit that actually the four purposes outlined in the early part of the bill, which sets out what this bill intends to achieve, would not be compromised. It would be accomplished and accomplished better.

• (1330)

In this amendment there is also a provision for proceeding by way of Order in Council, rather than by way of a decision that is not made public. As you know, an Order in Council has to be made known to the public by way of *The Canada Gazette*.

This is a very important step because it gives a clear and public record of the decision made by the government, by cabinet. It spells out the conditions of the approval including the mitigation measures in the approval, and it does empower the responsible authority to enforce the conditions of the order.

So there are several goals that are achieved by way of this amendment. They are: enforce the bill, make the public information process valid and real, and also give the enforcing authority the validity and the power and the weight of public opinion in the process of enforcing the measure itself.

So for these reasons which flow from clause 4 of the bill in which the purposes are outlined, as I already indicated a few times, the amendments are submitted to this House in the hope that they will be received favourably.

If Motion No. 18 were to be accepted, it would go a long way in defusing some of the criticism that is being addressed to this bill.

Mr. Len Taylor (The Battlefords—Meadow Lake): Mr. Speaker, I want to commend the member for Davenport for bringing this matter to our attention today.

It is obvious that there is a bit of a failing in that part of the bill as to the time when the ministers can delegate authority for various matters and not have a termination clause present.

I want to commend the member for bringing this to our attention today. I want to urge the government and other members to support this amendment because of its necessity.

Just to follow on the argument in support of the member's amendment, I want to quote a brief statement from the Minister of the Environment when he appeared before the legislative committee studying Bill C-13 on October 10, 1991.

The Minister of the Environment said that "while the amendments and proposed regulatory process are the product of more than four years of work, the bill before us will affect all parts of our society and it will create a new dynamic in environmental assessment. More than 80 departments and agencies have been involved, as well as the provinces, the territories, environmental and industry groups, and many others. Let us keep in mind that this act reflects a consensus which, in turn, reflects the growing understanding and concern Canadians share about the relationship between our economic activities and our natural environment".

I will just continue the quote for another brief second. The Minister of the Environment said: "I believe that the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act provides us with a flexible instrument with which we can meet the environmental challenges of the future. This bill constitutes a major advance in the field of environmental assessment. It encourages projects and practices that respect the environment, and it increases the public's influence over decision-making. This is not the end of the debate, but rather the beginning of a new era in environmental assessment".

If we take the Minister of the Environment at his word in this matter, we see that these are very strong, caring words about building an environmental assessment process that will, in fact, protect the environment over a long period of time.