

*Government Orders*

very competent according to the member for Davenport, has been getting harsher and harsher, lately.

Environmentalists, the provinces, experts and reporters are forthright in their assessment of the minister's work and action. Disappointment is felt everywhere. The minister's abilities are regularly called into question. Bill C-83 is itself a telling example of the government's weakness. The red book proposed an independent auditor. Liberals in the standing committee proposed the same. The result is that the minister is meeting them halfway: half result, half failure. And now the Liberals are bragging about their minister's accomplishments.

One would have to be really blind or totally soft in the head to congratulate the minister on this issue. The least we can say is that the Liberals are a spineless lot.

Another issue is endangered and threatened species. If I were a Liberal, a federalist, I would find that the minister's position on this is very poor, and that her plan of action leaves much to be desired. In fact, the member for Davenport himself has tabled a private member's bill, Bill C-275, which is aimed at protecting species. Is the very competent minister supporting this bill? Why is that legislation not part of the government agenda?

We, Quebec sovereignists, are very happy with the minister's half measures in this area. In Quebec, we are quite capable of taking care of our species. But if I were a Liberal, a federalist, I would not find the minister's performance in this area very good. The greenhouse gas issue? Another issue where the minister is incapable of reaching her objectives. The provinces seem increasingly to want to distance themselves from the minister on this issue. The same holds true for the whole issue of harmonization with the provinces.

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The provinces do not seem to like the minister's heavy-handedness, as she is more intent on imposing the federal will than harmonizing. That is another failure of the Liberals and their very competent minister.

As for the CEPA, the Canadian Environment Protection Act, we are still waiting for an answer from the minister. She is late, and despite the fact the committee clearly asked that she meet the deadline. Is the minister really looking after her responsibilities? I will let you answer that question. However, to ask the question is to answer it.

The *Irving Whale*, MMT, federal BCPs, etc., all these issues have something in common. Of course, they fall under the responsibility of the environment minister, but mainly they stand out as failures or as very sensitive issues whose management can only be described as incompetent and dominated by

petty politics. Are the members opposite asleep? Are they not aware of all the mistakes their minister is making and of her inability to run her department? How distinguished Liberal members, true environmentalists albeit federalists, unfortunately, can lavish such praise on the minister is beyond me.

From a sovereignist perspective, Bill C-83, as explained earlier, poses a very real threat of federal intrusion into a provincial area of jurisdiction. Looking very closely at clause 21.1, one can see this clearly.

Dealing at first with sustainable development, this clause refers further on, through subclauses *a* to *h*, to several items that are under provincial jurisdiction. True, the Liberals claim that these are merely general goals related to sustainable development. We think there is more to it than that if you look beyond the words and this list of goals. Over the long term, these goals will encourage federal departments to intrude upon the jurisdictions of other government levels. The fact that a commissioner will measure the performance of departments against these goals in their programs or projects will be an incentive for them to do more and to get better results, even if they overstep their own area of jurisdiction.

Thus, under clause 21.1, a department encroaching on an area of provincial jurisdiction will get a positive appraisal from the federal commissioner. There was certainly nothing else to be expected from the Liberal committee members. True to themselves, they repeated the same arguments they had put forward when we were studying the CEPA, the Canadian Environmental Protection Act.

Sustainable development, a concept which the Liberals use a great deal to crowd out the provinces, is an ideal all societies should strive for.

Let us be clear. What is at stake here is not the validity of this principle, but the way it is implemented.

The Bloc Quebecois not only recognizes the validity of the principle, but also the need, not to say the urgent need, to translate it into concrete measures.

We believe this principle should be implemented by the provinces because they have the overriding jurisdiction over the environment. It is up to the provinces to promote the conditions needed for sustainable development.

In a federal system, the principle of sustainable development takes on a new dimension, that is respect for jurisdictions and areas of authority. Obviously, the squandering of both financial and human resources in order to maintain a dual structure, is in no way sustainable.