

*Private Members' Business*

legislation that is to come down soon, hopefully, should as a minimum include in addition to legislative authority a mandatory process for each federal project and also for policies and programs. It will be difficult, but if we mean business and mean what we say by embracing the notion of sustainable development, it is very crucial.

We would also urge, as a minimum, assessments for environmental impacts and for environmental sustainability of a proposed project. We would urge, as a minimum, a provision whereby a project can only proceed when the environmental assessment is published and publicly reviewed and not afterward, as it has sometimes happened in the past. Before a decision is made to proceed, the assessment not only has to be made known, but be published and a public review possibly take place within 90 days of the publication of the assessment. I am sure that the Member for Fraser Valley West has thought about this component as well. It would also be desirable in the new legislation to have a mandatory debate in this parliament for major projects. It would be difficult in legislative terms to define what is a major project. It will take some ingenuity but that can be resolved I am sure in order to ensure that the parliamentarians of the day, particularly when it comes to a pipeline or a proposed tanker route, will have an opportunity to express their views and give governments an indication as to where the majority of parliamentarians stand on that particular proposal.

• (1750)

Finally, it is essential that in the legislation that is expected that there be included a program for the funding of intervenors. People who may be living in the remote parts of the country may want to speak, for instance, about a proposed dam in northern Alberta, a proposed pipeline in the Northwest Territories. In order to be heard, there is the necessity for them to travel and therefore to be funded.

If you think about environmental assessment and what is really behind this very heavy phraseology and what this review process is all about, in essence it is an assessment as to the impact in the long term, the economic and environmental impact in the long term, which come together usually if they are approached with the long term in mind. It would be the economic impact on native communities when something is being planned from

outside those communities. It could be the impact on certain non-quantifiable things such as the beauty of a landscape or, if you like, the quality of life or of wildlife itself. Therefore what we are talking about here is not an abstract notion but a very real one which may not be easily quantified in practicable terms but which must be done if we really mean what we say about sustainable development.

**Mr. Brian O'Kurley (Elk Island):** Madam Speaker, I welcome the motion of the member for Fraser Valley West.

First, I would like to congratulate him. As some of us will recall, he had the foresight a decade ago to recognize the need for comprehensive federal environmental assessment legislation and introduced his Private Members' Bill, the environmental impact assessment bill.

The member's motion is indeed timely because the government will introduce, this session, its proposed environmental assessment bill. It will require an impact assessment of all proposals for which the federal government has decision-making responsibility, but will respect areas of provincial jurisdiction.

As we know, there has long been a need for legislation that provides for sound environmental management and planning. We can no longer afford to be simply reactive to environmental matters. We must consider environmental aspects when planning every federal proposal. The public has expressed its rising concern over the last decade. Citizens from all walks of life recognize that neglecting the environment threatens them individually as well as casting an ominous shadow over the future of the entire human race.

Canadians have spoken out in various ways, through demands to their elected officials, through participation in environmental groups and through a constant expression of concern in public opinion polls. Our business community is investing in environmentally improved methods. Canadian scientists are also cautioning us of the mounting threat to our way of life and ultimately to our survival.

As is known since it was first elected in 1984, this government has acted with purpose and direction. It passed the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, created a special committee of cabinet and will soon put forward a comprehensive environmental assessment bill.