

the EARP guidelines and certainly as proposed under Bill C-13 which will be coming back before this House in the near future.

We believe if we are to work towards the attainment of our common goals we must do so in co-operation with those same provincial governments, with their municipal governments, with business, with the employees of business, with environmental groups, and with the public at large.

We believe that the key to the achievement of sustainable development is indeed the establishment of important environment and economic links and partnerships.

We fear that an entrenched environmental bill of rights would have the result of undermining that proposed partnership between all sectors of society which we feel is required to meet the challenges posed by environmental degradation.

We fear that that would occur because we fear that it would lead to a confrontational approach to the resolution of problems rather than to a co-operative approach.

I accept and I understand that on occasion there must be recourse to the courts. I think that is an inevitable by-product of our legislative process and the manner in which we have accepted responsibility under the federal system for the various areas of governmental duty.

I firmly believe as well that if we can wherever possible avoid that recourse to the courts which sometimes leads to a confrontational approach, it is in our collective interest to do so.

We do not believe that we should in any way limit the flexibility of legislatures. We believe that in some cases the very high cost of litigation can actually serve to deter the rights of individuals to be a part of the process.

Speaking philosophically, I very much prefer a system of co-operation and partnership which accepts the fact that no single level of government, no single player in the process, has the sole responsibility for development and for the protection of our heritage now and in the future.

This government has begun working in the right direction as we have tried to establish a system whereby

there is room for public participation. Indeed there is encouragement for public participation as outlined in Bill C-13.

We have begun to move in the right direction in establishing these partnerships and linkages. In doing that I accept the fact that the Canadian people, as demonstrated during the consultations to the green plan, are asking us as a federal government to accept the very significant role of leadership in that process.

I for one believe that we have a responsibility to act as Canadians have told us to do and to accept the responsibility of providing leadership and perhaps even a greater degree of responsibility in certain areas and other levels of government. But I am firmly of the mind that if we are going to succeed in the long run, it will not be because one level of government has attempted or achieved a greater degree of superiority over others. It will be because we will have worked out a philosophy in Canada whereby Canadians, irrespective of where they live or of which part of society they may be a part of, have come to the conclusion that it is in our common collective best interests to work together toward a common goal.

As a federal government, I am proud of the leadership which we have provided to date. I am proud of the green plan, the six year long-term strategy, the first of its kind in this country. I am proud of the financial commitment of \$3 billion that has been made available for the implementation of that plan. I am proud of the fact that that green plan to a very significant degree is a direct result of a fairly extensive and, in the minds of some, perhaps somewhat laborious process of consultation with others. I am proud of the fact that the green plan represents, according to my calculations, a recognition of approximately 80 per cent of the plans and goals identified, proposals put forth by Canadians in this proposal.

I am pleased that prior to accepting my present responsibilities, the federal government put forth the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, which has put into place a system of clearly defined responsibilities, a holistic approach on the part of the government, an approach that accepts the need for nationally consistent standards of environmental quality.