

Government Orders

My question is this: Considering the fact that the Government of Quebec unanimously passed a resolution this afternoon that the National Assembly strongly disapproves of the federal government's Bill C-13, an act to establish a federal environmental assessment process, since it is contrary to the higher interests of Quebec, and objects to its passage by the Parliament of Canada, I fail to understand why members who claim to defend the interests of Quebec, especially Conservative members who represent the federal government, did not rise this afternoon to object to a bill that goes against the interests of Quebec and Quebec's economic development.

I want to ask the hon. member from Vancouver: What does she think of the federal government's arrogance in wanting to interfere in Quebec's affairs, since the federal government knows perfectly well the Government of Quebec can judge for itself what is or is not good for the environment?

[*English*]

Ms. Hunter: Mr. Speaker, I find it really disturbing that a member sitting in this House is playing petty politics with the world's environment and wanting to get some points in the Quebec legislature when we are talking about a dying planet.

The priorities are mind boggling. What this government is doing by introducing this bill is a laudable goal. What we are seeing is here. Rather than having the courage to come to any meetings with either the Minister responsible for Constitutional Affairs or the Ministers of the Environment, the Quebec legislators are giving out their ideas on what the restructuring of our federalism should be through press releases.

I challenge the members from Quebec to come and talk. Tell us what you want. It does not seem to be an unreasonable approach. No, they do not. They sit in their houses in Quebec City and issue edicts of what is acceptable and what is not. This is environmental legislation that is crucial. It is flawed but it is crucial. We have heard from the Bloc Quebecois that it is willing to play petty politics with little maps with which it would like to be able to preserve the world environment. The world's environment is not protected by drawing lines on a globe.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Leblanc (Longueuil): Mr. Speaker, we do not play politics with the environment. What we in the Bloc Quebecois are saying is that Quebec is as capable as the federal government of making decisions about the environment with its partners, be they the United States, the rest of Canada, the maritimes, Europe or Brazil, as she said. I do not want us to be called anti-environment. On the contrary, we say that we are as capable as the federal government, that it will go much better and would be much more efficient.

[*English*]

Ms. Hunter: I want to make it very clear in case people have missed it. I speak for Canada. I see Canada as part of the world. I think that the Canadian government, the federal government, has a responsibility and I want that responsibility to be paramount in environmental concerns. That is why I worked hard on the Beaudoin-Dobbie committee to ensure that the residual power stayed with the federal government—peace, order and good government.

We are a nation state. Quebec is not. If it wants to change the arrangements down the road I will cry. I will weep for Canada and for Quebec because it will be bad for Quebec, bad for Canada and bad for the world. It is not just the environment that will suffer. The economy and our international reputation will also suffer.

When I say the member is playing petty politics I mean it. This is the pettiest of politics. He is going to be blamed for the amount of concern he has expressed for the environment, which is none.

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg Transcona): Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that the debate that has been raging for the last little while requires a little more attention. One of the things I thought every right-minded person in the world had come to realize, particularly in a post-Brundtland report world, was that the environment is not something which can be neatly circumscribed by boundaries, either national boundaries or provincial boundaries. Therefore I find the position being taken by the Bloc Quebecois to be quite questionable and reprehensible because it is asking the rest of us to accept that what