

*Government Orders*

argued quite succinctly as to why that wording should be added.

I think we should take a look again for a moment at line 37 on page 24 because at the moment that subparagraph (ii) reads:

(ii) the project is likely to cause significant adverse environmental effects that can be justified in the circumstances,

That basically says to the proponent, whether it is the government, a Crown agency, an arm of government, the private sector, a provincial authority, a territorial authority, a First Nations project, or whatever, simply that "the project is likely to cause significant adverse environmental effects that can be justified in the circumstances".

Well, who is going to justify them? We get back to the whole question, a debate that lingers not only in Canada but in many countries around the world in these now five years since the Brundtland commission came down with its report *Our Common Future* and came down with a definition of sustainable development. There are many—not only in the private sector, who are developers, but many members of this House with whom I have had personal and lengthy discussions—who do not understand what sustainable development means. They truly do believe it means sustained development—business as usual, the status quo, and simply allowing judgments to be made politically and expediently on the basis of the determination of profitability.

• (1550)

What my friend from Davenport is attempting to reinject here is a sense of reality, because the planet faces a kind of stress and pressure that it has never faced before, whether it is loss of species, pollution of the oceans, pollution of freshwater systems, global warming, or a hole in the ozone. It is a very trying time for a young person to be growing up and thinking that governments, particularly governments of a country such as Canada, are incapable, either by design or by political purpose, not only of understanding what sustainable development truly is in terms of survivability and habitability of the planet, but of making what really should be a showpiece of legislation.

As I see in my documents here, external affairs hopes to travel around the world promoting Canada as the archdeacon of environmental prowess around the world. Frankly, Bill C-13, with a series of modifications and a much more strenuous application of parliamentary scru-

tiny to the regulatory provisions, could start approaching that level of value to Canada and to the world community. But I think it is appropriate—and like other speakers, I really do look forward to hearing from the government side about why it took so long to pound the reference to sustainable development into the preamble of this, why it took so long to pound the actual Brundtland definition into the purposes clause, and in two circumstances where it is clearly appropriate, clearly helpful and clearly sound, both at law and in principle, to include the goal of achieving sustainable development so that one would proceed with a project that had serious environmental consequences on its own only if that were leading to the goal of sustainable development.

Every project, as we know, large or small, has a measurable impact on the biosystems of earth. Anything we do, including speaking in this chamber, has an impact on the biosystems, however small. What we are suggesting here, and what the member for Davenport is suggesting, is that we have to keep the ultimate goal in mind, that this is an intergenerational process that we have to start recognizing. In a period of a very small number of generations, almost entirely those who have lived during the 20th century have brought about, in many areas of the world, problems that will take centuries and, in some cases, millennia to repair.

Let us go back for a moment to these secret FEARO documents I was referring to earlier. It is instructive from time to time to have a look at the road the government was planning to follow in terms of this legislation in the months and years leading up to today. I quote from page 8, section 11:

The Need for the Assessment of Policy Proposals: The World Commission on Environment and Development (Brundtland Commission) and the Canadian National Task Force on Environment and Economy have profoundly influenced the thinking of the informed community that is advocating the strengthening of the federal EARP. That community sees clearly, and has expressed very forcefully, that the assessment of proposed policies is an essential element in pursuing sustainable development. Environment considerations must be integrated with economic, technical, social and political factors in government decisions on new policies. Environmental assessment legislation will not be publicly acceptable without addressing this issue in a straightforward manner. If there is no legal obligation to assess policy proposals, the critics of the Process do not believe it will be done consistently or adequately. Moreover, exemption of policy proposals from the Process would be seen as a backward step, as the Order can be interpreted as applying to policy initiatives.