

The Canadian Arctic Resources Committee, in a first-class study by Dr. R. William Rees, published in *Northern Perspectives*, sums up the situation succinctly. With your indulgence, Mr. Speaker, I will quote from Dr. Rees' report. He said:

The over-all conclusion pertaining to The Environmental Assessment and Review Process is inescapable. Given the "ludicrous" time-frame, skimpy data base, and direct interference from Ottawa, the best efforts of AWAC/RODAC could not satisfy the minimal requirements of a rigorous and effective screening process.

That is damning evidence indeed. The findings of Dr. Rees, which I have just quoted, are well supported in a confidential report, which I have, of the government's own Arctic Waters Advisory Committee dated February, 1980. I do not have the time to quote this at length, but let me refer to just a few passages which tell the tale. That confidential report of the government's own advisory committee stated "in the past—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I regret to interrupt the hon. member, but I must advise him that his allotted time has expired. I am sorry. I was mistaken. I am advised by the Clerk at the table there is still some time left and I apologize to the hon. member.

Mr. McMillan: I will continue with my quote, Mr. Speaker.

Government decision-making processes resulting in approvals for land-based support facilities and dredging for the approach to Tuk and inside McKinley Bay did not meet the minimum standards for adequate environmental review and assessment.

The same report continues:

It appears that senior officials in Ottawa . . . decided to "avoid any time-consuming and administrative hindrances" in securing the necessary approvals for the proponent (Canmar).

Another quote from the same report reads:

Recommendations that were specific and required standards of performance from Canmar or more thorough review which might have caused delays were not implemented or significantly altered by Ottawa to make them ineffective.

Finally, we read the following:

The compromise of the environmental review processes has potentially jeopardized not only the environment but the governmental review and decision-making processes as well.

The AWAC report from which I have just quoted documents the assertion, on page after page, that Canmar—and I use this as but one example—is violating and is being allowed by the government to violate operating conditions set by the government itself. Those violations are outlined in great detail in the February, 1980, draft report of the government's own Arctic Waters Advisory Committee.

In my opinion, the government must be able to manage the total social and physical environment in the Arctic in the face of an influx of southern technology. That geographical area covers something like 40 per cent of the territory of our country. Although vast, it is the most environmentally vulnerable region in all of Canada. Because of the frigid climate, a major oil spill or a well-site blowout here would have disastrous consequences for the delicate ecosystems, as well as the traditional lifestyle of the native people. We cannot wait until the damage has been done in the Arctic or in any other such area because, according to experts, it may well be irreversible.

Canada Oil and Gas Act

The environmental screening procedures will have to be tied more closely to the development approach concept. There must be a streamlining of the entire process so that industry, and government both—not just industry, but government, too—know how to operate by the rules.

At present, there exist some 23 pieces of legislation to regulate activities like Canmar's. The government needs to examine a process by which a one-window approach to legislation and regulation can be achieved. Bill C-48 compounds the problem. It does not mitigate it.

I wish to draw your attention, Mr. Speaker, to subclause 11 of clause 49. That subclause says:

The governor in council may make regulations for the administration of the relevant fund.

This much we do know. The section to which I have referred is shrouded in ambiguity. We do not know what the regulations are to be. It is open-ended. It makes reference to regulations, but it does not define them. It just authorizes that they be made. I ask myself, and I invite the House to consider, the following: given the ambiguity and the open-ended nature of that subclause, what principles will guide the use of the fund? What is to ensure the maximum access to it by the public and others? Certainly there are examples of funds being established to which, in practice, access is difficult if not impossible. The Maritime Pollution Claims Fund is a case in point.

The government continuously hides behind regulations. It leaves much of the true force and thrust of its legislation—in this case as in so many others—to regulations and to federal bureaucracy. That is not acceptable, in my view. Among other things, such a situation frustrates the purpose of Parliament and the goals with respect to which Parliament is being asked to legislate. In my opinion, there must be a more specific mandate under legislation to government, whether it has to do with environmental funds or any other subject.

Clearly amendments are required; there must be direction to administrators in the public service as to how the funds are to be allocated, along with an accountability system to ensure that such funds are not being institutionally frozen or flushed through senseless programs. Above all, the legislation must recognize the role already assigned by Parliament to various government departments, the Department of the Environment and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans in particular.

● (2110)

More than anything else there has to be the will to honour environmental principles. There has to be some consistency in legislation. There has to be a dedication and devotion to the environment for its own sake. Environment principles should be viewed as ends in themselves, not as a subterfuge for government inaction. This government's good faith in environmental matters, as in so many other areas, is seriously in doubt in my estimation.

To use an example, in 1979 the Environmental Assessment and Review Process panel appointed by the Minister of State for Science and Technology and Minister of the Environment to assess the Alaska highway gas pipeline concluded that