

*Government Orders*

make that in 20 minutes or less. If we look at that in the context of a corporation making multimillions of dollars, to fine them small \$2,000 or \$3,000 fines is a waste of time.

There has to be a better way, and I think the better way is through other kinds of penalties. It is not only part of our policy. We will be looking at it in depth as soon as we become government in three years.

**Mr. Taylor:** Mr. Speaker, in response to the member's earlier comments about the Fraser Valley and air quality, I am wondering if he has opinions about other issues, that perhaps a federal environmental assessment could be done in relation to the Alcan project in British Columbia or the Clayoquot Sound issue in British Columbia. Are these also issues on which the member believes a federal environmental assessment process could be entertained?

**Mr. White (Fraser Valley West):** Mr. Speaker, somebody over there said I have an opinion on everything; they are probably right.

The assessment of projects, if I have the question right, is applicable to virtually all projects, big or small. Kemano is a good example and that is being undertaken now of course. I do not think it is not the size of the project. I think it is the effect the project may have on our environment.

I think I have answered the question. I am not quite sure. I will leave it at that.

[Translation]

**Mr. Martin Cauchon (Outremont, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am especially happy today to join the Minister of the Environment in speaking to Bill C-56, an Act to amend the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act.

I think that in analyzing this bill, we must pay close attention to the actions of Opposition members, particularly members of the Official Opposition. In addressing environmental assessments, the Bloc Québécois clearly showed that its mandate has nothing to do with protecting Quebecers' interests. In fact, the Bloc stubbornly criticizes the proclamation of the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, which was designed by its own leader. These actions confirm that the only goal of the Official Opposition, the Bloc Québécois, is to look after the interests of Quebec's separatist government.

As the leader of the Bloc has often said, the environment has no borders. In an interview published in the October 13 edition of *The Gazette*, the hon. member who is the leader of the Bloc Québécois said this in English:

[English]

The problem is that the word environment never appears in the Constitution so the provinces and the federal government are

condemned to work jointly. They have to work together. If they do not it is chaos.

• (1730)

[Translation]

All levels of government share a great and noble responsibility with regard to the environment. All levels of government in Canada have a responsibility to ensure that development is carried out in a rational way while at the same time respecting the natural balance.

It is clear that Canadians want jobs, but not at the expense of their children or the environment. Of all the tools available to protect the environment, the environmental assessment is undoubtedly the most effective. In fact, environmental assessment is inexpensive preventive medicine. It gives us advance warning of the possible environmental impact of a project and it promotes informed public participation in the decision-making process.

If members of this House agree that environmental jurisdiction is shared and that environmental assessment is a good way to prevent pollution, how can we explain that some members opposite stubbornly insist on condemning the proclamation of this bill? Let us briefly look together at the so-called problems raised by the Bloc's environment critic.

When the Minister of the Environment on October 6 announced the government's decision to proclaim the law, the Bloc critic condemned this as a federal attempt to interfere in provincial jurisdiction. Of course, such reaction from the Bloc Québécois is quite natural. I must say that I was stupefied when I heard those remarks about Bill C-56.

In fact, what Bill C-56 does is exactly the opposite of what the Bloc is again trying to have all Quebecers believe. If the federal government wanted to meddle in provincial affairs or make things difficult for Quebec by interfering with its economic development, it would not propose the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act. It would keep the famous 1984 EARP Guidelines Order and it would use it systematically.

Why? Because that order allows the federal government to examine the environmental impact of any proposal over which it has a decision-making power. Do you know how the term "proposal" is defined in the order? It is described as any undertaking or activity over which the government has a say in the decision process.

In concrete terms, this means every project, activity and initiative in which the federal government is involved. It also includes all direct and indirect subsidies to provinces, including equalization payments, as well as every Canada-Quebec agreement on regional development, and all federal subsidies to businesses. That definition also includes hundreds of licences, permits and authorizations delivered every day by the federal government.