

projects, but it does not apply environmental assessment criteria to these projects; nor does the legislation speak to it.

The legislation allows Crown corporations to set their own criteria and allows the Canadian government offshore to negotiate or to ignore the very guidelines it applies to itself in this country. Our party considers that to be a major flaw in the efforts being made here.

There have been recent discussions by Probase International, a Toronto-based research organization interested in international problems. It reviewed, for example, the Three Gorges project in China, which will be the biggest hydroelectric dam project in the history of the world. Canada has been very active through engineering firms and through CIDA, in funding the engineering work.

Essentially the proponents of this project came forward with a very strong recommendation that the project should continue. Probase International went in with an impartial group of international experts. They looked at that project and for every set of recommendations, for every chapter, they had point after point after point of what had been missed by the original proponents.

This goes back to the point that governments cannot be both project proponents, actively trying to encourage a particular project and at the same time saying: "We will evaluate our own work". They cannot have it both ways. There is an obligation to the Canadian people to set up a more independent process.

This government has failed in this legislation to protect in any way Canadians from the ambitions of provincial and federal governments.

For example, in clause 22, the responsible authority is given wide powers to ignore or terminate the environmental review provisions of the act. The minister, who is the final court of appeal under the act, is given similar powers under clause 23. In clauses 34(a) and 34(b), the opinion of the responsible authority is the only factor necessary in deciding whether or not a project should proceed. As we see, this act is no more than a toothless paper tiger.

Government Orders

We cannot continue to exploit the environment at the rate at which we have done so in the past. Jobs alone, although jobs are so important particularly in small communities, cannot be the only priority. We have to balance our concern for economic growth with the need for our physical survival and the health of our planet.

To my colleagues on that side of the House the phrase "sustainable development" means a licence to push industrial exploitation to the very limits. We can see by just how much failure there has been in Winnipeg itself with the institute. We are still waiting to see it actually get off the ground and be operational in a way that is going to mean something, not only to Canadians but to people throughout the international community.

There are many other points which are weak in this legislation. I am very disappointed in the way the government has introduced it. The government had an opportunity during the summer to build up a coalition of support among well meaning and interested Canadians, people who would give them their time and thoughts, people who would encourage them to strengthen the legislation.

There is among Canadians in every community and in every walk of life a will to protect the environment. It is one of the last areas in which we can prove ourselves as politicians to be of goodwill toward this planet. We fail people in so many other ways and, if we continue to fail them in the area of the environment, it will be the blackest of black marks against this Parliament.

Mr. Jim Karpoff (Surrey North): Mr. Speaker, I have been following this debate with considerable interest. It has become obvious that Bill C-78 is dramatically flawed.

I want to start out by saying to the hon. member who just spoke that I appreciate many of his remarks. I want to ask him what his thoughts are on this piece of legislation when applied to a very specific situation. In my riding, which borders on the Fraser River, we have had the CN Railways expropriate all of the foreshore and is in the process of putting in an intermodal yard.

• (1700)

It will end up being the biggest rail yard in Canada. It is being built right across the last freshwater marsh on the lower Fraser River. No environmental assessment has been done. It is jeopardizing the wildlife. It is jeopardiz-