

*Government Orders*

Would the member not recognize in the latter part of the sentence the very definition of sustainable development as used in the Brundtland report?

**Mr. McGuire:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for the question.

If the definition of sustainable development is a very important aspect of the legislation, why has the government refused to give a definition and to include that definition as part of the bill?

What is the government afraid of? Why is it so afraid to be bound to a strict interpretation which could be incorporated in the bill so all Canadians will know exactly what the government means when it says sustainable development. Why does it not put the definition in right now?

**Ms. Lynn Hunter (Saanich—Gulf Islands):** Mr. Speaker, I listened with care to the member's speech on Bill C-78. I was heartened to hear him bring up the whole issue of definitions and the importance of definitions in this whole debate. What we are talking about is sustainability. Sustainability is a term that requires greater focusing on definition.

We must also define more broadly what the term environment means. We must adopt a broader term to include the social, economic and cultural environment as well as the biophysical environment. The term "environmental effects" also has to be broadened. The definition must be included to the long-term individual, additive, synergistic and punitive effects.

I am quoting from a paper by Dr. Robert Gibson who is with the department of environment and resource studies from the University of Waterloo. I recommend this paper to the government. It is entitled *The Basic Requirements for Environmental Assessment Processes*. Although I was opposed to the bill before I read it, it heightened my opposition to Bill C-78 because the evident flaws in Bill C-78 became all the more clear having read this paper.

This is a bill that is fatally flawed. I agree with the member's assessment that it should be withdrawn, completely redrafted and brought back. It is so shot full of holes, as my hon. colleague from Skeena points out—he entitles it Swiss cheese—in his usual colourful way he has encapsulated the whole problem with the bill. It is shot full of holes and should be withdrawn from the

Order Paper. Otherwise, I recommend that members such as the previous speaker vote against it.

**Mr. Dennis Mills (Broadview—Greenwood):** Mr. Speaker, I want to go back to the previous point that the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment made.

He brought up the point about sustainable development being in the bill. Once again this government thinks that we on this side have not become aware of the trick that it is using. There is a preamble to a bill which describes it in general and then there is the body. It is only when we have the words in the body of the bill that it really has teeth and substance.

I want to ask the hon. member's view, again, on this national standard question. I happen to believe with the words "sustainable development" left just in the preamble, when it comes to enforcing standards coast to coast, the bill does not really have any teeth. I repeat, does the hon. member not agree with me that, once again, this is going to weaken the national standards for this very important issue?

**Mr. McGuire:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for the clarification he has just made. Canadians, right across the country, are looking for a precise definition of what sustainable development is and what is the actual contents of an environmental assessment.

In Prince Edward Island and Nova Scotia, there was an EARP recently done on the fixed link between P.E.I. and New Brunswick. This whole thing about the fixed link was begun by two ex-ministers, people who are no longer with us today, but the seeds that they have sown are still with us. The ex-Minister of the Environment was prepared to go to build a fixed link, even without an environmental assessment. This was a federal Minister of the Environment who was willing to take on a really crucial and a major project in eastern Canada, without an environmental assessment review, because he was willing to do it for political purposes.

Anyway, cooler heads prevailed and the environmental assessment review was done and reported. We were really no better off after the assessment than before the assessment. People in Prince Edward Island still do not know whether the link is an on project or an off project. What Canadians are looking for is to know when a project is environmentally feasible and when it is not.