

Government Orders

I might add that some municipalities in our country, whether they want to or not, are contributing to pollution and the degradation of our environment. Unless we bring that third level of government into the picture, we are going to find ourselves in a bit of an awkward situation when it comes to major problems, whether they are federal initiatives, provincial initiatives, or for that matter, whether they are third sector initiatives.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is time for the minister to take a deep breath, go back a little bit and start with that objective in mind, that is, the involvement of all of the partners in the issue of the environment. We must make sure that everyone is buying in because unless all levels of government buy in to what the federal government is doing, I do not think we will see this bill succeeding.

I do know the minister has the environment issue at heart. I know he is very serious about the issue and I think it is quite timely for him to start this consultation process and bring those different partners together.

Mr. Lyle Kristiansen (Kootenay West—Revelstoke): Mr. Speaker, in addressing Bill C-78, an act to establish a federal environmental assessment process, I want to say right off the bat that, in our view, this is not a good bill.

It is long overdue. It has been long awaited. It is full of missing links and the process that led to the bill before us was short circuited.

Finally, it is a recipe for conflict because of what is missing in the bill, and I will come to that in a moment. The bill before us is not a recipe for resource management or conflict management, or a recipe for conflict resolution, but, rather, it is a bill that creates conflict by indecision and by what is missing from it. It is management for conflict, not to resolve conflict.

What is wrong with Bill C-78? First of all, the bill will be less effective than the EARP guidelines currently in place. It will undo progress made through court decisions like the Muldoon decision on the Rafferty-Alameda dam. Measures in the bill are left to the discretion of the environment minister, making it difficult for the courts to order compliance. Cabinet decisions and government policy, in general, will be exempted from the law, and

although intervener funding has been promised, it is not in the legislation, so it could be easily withdrawn.

In addition, the level of funding is not clear. Crown corporations, CIDA, and export development corporations are exempted. Basic questions like, which projects will be reviewed, which will be exempt, and what rules will apply, are not answered by this bill. This will be in the regulations which can be easily changed by the cabinet, at the minister's and the cabinet's discretion.

When it comes to process, the bill was introduced and first reading was given on June 18, 1990. It was then referred to a special pre-study committee. The pre-study committee was disbanded before any work was done, and now we have the bill before us for second reading.

Just that short list of inadequacies and missing links is enough to make one think that this is the animal that was created by the proverbial committee, the double-humped or, in this case, the triple-humped camel. Except it was not done by a committee, it was done within the bowels of the ministry, with a pre-study committee that never got a chance to really adequately deal with the subject matter placed before it.

I would like to put this bill in the context of a dispute, a resource conflict which has taken place and is still taking place within my own constituency. The proposal for the modernization and expansion of the Celgar pulp mill in Castlegar, British Columbia first came to public light at the end of 1989. The Celgar Pulp Company is proposing to expand its bleached kraft pulp mill on the Columbia River, at Castlegar, B.C. The company operates as a joint venture between CITIC Inc. and Power Consolidated Pulp Inc. of the People's Republic of China.

Celgar filed an environmental impact assessment report, as a prospectus, with a major project steering committee in December of 1989. It was not until the end of June of this year, a full six months later, when we finally got the federal government and the provincial government to get their acts together to put a combined impact review process into place.

In that time feelings naturally arose, as they do in any community and especially in a community with as many activists, both pro and con, on these kinds of issues as mine does, and the absence of a review process, one that was in place or could be easily put into place between the two levels of government—and nobody suggests that that