

We put against that what this bill does in giving cabinet a great deal of discretion as to whether an environmental assessment will or will not be carried out and in giving cabinet the ability to exempt major classes of projects from any environmental assessment whatsoever. The environmental groups which have said that the court decisions put us in a stronger position *vis-à-vis* the environment and the requirement for a public review than this legislation are absolutely correct.

I want to go to a more specific problem that directly affects the minister's portfolio and how he is going to interpret the mandate of his department with respect to the environment and sustainable development.

Some of my colleagues have pointed out that the bill does not deal with sustainable development. It is very clear from the minister's comments that he and probably the rest of his colleagues do not understand or have not even started thinking about the whole principle of sustainable development. If the minister had done so, he would certainly not be satisfied with an assessment from any consultant that simply says there are no environmentally sensitive features on the land.

He would be asking important questions like the following ones. How much housing are we going to be developing? How much energy is it going to use? How much water is it going to pollute? How can we ensure that development on this site takes into consideration all principles of sustainable development, minimizing our use of resources, minimizing our production of wastes, and minimizing our pollution of water? Only then can he as minister of housing say that his department is truly looking at principles of sustainable development in every program it has.

We have a very good example of this in Lebreton Flats where the federal government is coming forward with plans and has paid absolutely no attention to principles of sustainable development, as I have just been discussing them.

I wonder if the minister can tell me if he is prepared to get himself a little more educated, so that when he is responsible for the development of urban areas, as he is in most cases, he will ensure that the developments that his department is funding are in fact minimizing their impact on the environment and on the use of resources.

Government Orders

Hon. Alan Redway (Minister of State (Housing)): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to have heard the hon. member's question and her comments as well.

I might say my comments related to the fact that the 1984 rules and regulations or guidelines that were put in place by the former government, of which party she is a member, indeed were intended to be voluntary. Certainly there have been decisions since then of the courts and they have changed the interpretation of those guidelines, but the former Liberal government which put the 1984 guidelines in place certainly never intended them to be anything else but voluntary.

This government is introducing a piece of legislation which will change all of that once and for all, clearly set it out, and we will not have to rely on the courts to tell us that there is something firm in place there.

The hon. member has also referred to the question of sustainable development. While she has touched on two aspects of sustainable development, she has neglected the third aspect which is a very important aspect as well and one which I, the federal housing agency and my officials take very seriously and are applying in each and every case now and will be in the future.

The first is the whole question of the physical environment that is there. We have to take that into account. Also taken into account is the actual development of the housing and the economic factor. Third, taken into account in the whole area of sustainable development is the social factor and what sort of impact that has on the entire social fabric.

One of the important aspects of that is the whole question of ghettoization, the importance of making sure that we have mixed communities and that we do not create social problems by the housing developments we put in place.

Sustainable development is more than just the economy and the environment. It also entails these social aspects and the quality of life. All these are things the Government of Canada, the federal housing agency, CMHC, and I personally, are taking into account. I hope that the hon. member will have a chance to read some of the speeches that I have given in the past on the question of sustainable development. I know she will find them most interesting.