

Government Orders

[English]

Ms. Hunter: Mr. Speaker, to resume my train of thought, because of the priority of this legislation, I find it curious in the extreme that there are not more ministers speaking out not only for Canada but for the world's environment. I find it curious that the Official Opposition is not giving this issue the kind of priority it should. If this is the most important environmental legislation to come before this House in many, many years, where is the so-called Official Opposition? Why are they not participating in this debate?

• (1800)

I want to now go back and review a little bit of the history of this bill. Bill C-13 is much improved. The all-party committee that put forward the amendments over a 20-month period worked hard, and the legislation is much improved. My colleague from The Battlefords—Meadow Lake has achieved many, many amendments through this long and arduous process. We must remember that there was the pre-study, there was Bill C-78 and then Parliament was prorogued. When Bill C-13 came back in the new Parliament, the government had incorporated many of the amendments that had been brought forward in Bill C-78. All of that work needs to be acknowledged. I think that people who are watching this debate and will be reading *Hansard* need to know the kind of progress that has been made.

My colleague from The Battlefords—Meadow Lake put forward two very important amendments to this legislation. One of them was passed, that is the five year review. The other one regarding regulations was not. The government chose to vote against it. That is an important, crucial part of the legislation. This was made very clear in committee. As was said, far more than in most legislation, the teeth to federal environmental assessment lies in regulations yet to be approved or drafted.

The exclusion list outlining what projects and what types of projects will not be required to be subjected to review will be in the regulations. The procedures governing how public participation will occur will be left to regulations. The comprehensive study list will be left to regulations. Procedures for examining written evidence will be left to regulations. Public registries will be dealt with in regulations. The workings of follow-up programs will be left to regulations. The absence of those regula-

tions and bringing them back to the House is a real vacuum of power. We have, as I see it, a major deficiency in the bill because of the government's choice not to support that amendment from my colleague from The Battlefords—Meadow Lake.

I would like to turn to my area of responsibility and that is the international environment. There are two major projects I want to put forward as examples. The first is the Three Gorges project in China. Canada, through CIDA, has put forward \$14 million for a feasibility study. This, under this legislation, would not be able to be reviewed. This is not a project; it is a feasibility study. Yet, this Three Gorges project will have an enormous impact on the environment in China. It will have an enormous impact on the lives of the people there. We are talking about destruction of whole ecosystems. It will change the river's hydrology. It will jeopardize a cultural heritage and \$14 million of our tax dollars has gone to a feasibility study.

There has now been a ruling. The jury of the second international water tribunal has found that feasibility study far short of what should be desired. We have seen major deficiencies and yet, with regard to the Three Gorges project, China has said: "Yes, we will take that feasibility study" which says the Three Gorges project should be proceeded with, "as a rationale to proceed". China will come back to Canada and say: "You guys thought it was a good idea. Now, we would like some more money please so that we can proceed with the construction of the dam on the Three Gorges".

This is just not acceptable to Canadians. This is a major deficiency in this bill as well.

The second example is the new project on which my friend Tom Berger from British Columbia is currently doing an independent review for the World Bank. It is called the Sardar Saravar Dam in India. It is the World Bank linkages that I want to address my comments to.

This dam is a major project. The World Bank is paying about 15 per cent of approximately \$6 billion for this dam. As you well know, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance for Canada sits on the board of directors of the World Bank. There is no transparency in what his decisions might be and in how they might affect the world's environment. We do not know. They get into a room. They close the doors. They make the decisions. It is our tax dollars that are financing it.