

life, but a better life that preserves our environment, not only for themselves but for us as well.

People in the Third World who are in need and who are beneficiaries of our projects want to have a voice in the projects that are put forward for their benefit. I think that we have a responsibility to help them to participate in the decision-making process.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Debate. The hon. member for Ottawa South, and then I will recognize the hon. member for Wetaskiwin. I will then go to the hon. member for Surrey North, and then the hon. member for Winnipeg North.

Mr. John Manley (Ottawa South): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for Wetaskiwin for rearranging the time so that I could proceed now.

I think that this is a very important piece of legislation that we are dealing with today, important not only because of what is contained in the bill itself and the fact that it sets out in legislative form the guidelines for environmental assessment at the federal level, but also because it needs to be a representation of what the Parliament of Canada believes in terms of environmental value.

We have certainly been evolving very rapidly in our understanding as a society of the importance of preserving the environment, not just for our own enjoyment at the present time, but for future generations.

What this bill needs to do and what it perhaps fails to do is to ensure for all of us that the standards that we expect to be applied to the preservation and protection of the environment are done in a fair, clear, effective and meaningful way.

We know that this bill is an evolution from the previous guidelines that existed. One would hope that by taking the guidelines and putting them into statutory form, that an advance forward would have been made. In fact by actually taking what previously had been a guideline and saying it is now the law of Canada, it is in the statute books, that we actually would have been able to say, "Look at this. Canada has moved forward. Canada has established a rule of law with respect to the protection of the environment which will be a model for

countries around the world". But I fear that the government has failed in the bill that it has put forward.

I point out the preamble where the object of the legislation is set out. The preamble states that the object is "to achieve an appropriate balance between economic development and the preservation and enhancement of environmental quality". That, Mr. Speaker, indicates the fundamental flaw in thinking that underlies this piece of legislation.

To see the environment and its preservation and protection as somehow in a continuum or as a trade-off with economic development is exactly the wrong approach to this issue. In fact, economic development for the future depends upon environmental protection now. It is not a trade-off. Our future economic well-being is not going to be improved by degrading the environment today. Our future economic well-being depends upon us acting today to preserve and protect the environment that surrounds us. It is as crucial tomorrow as it is today, as it was when we did not know about in years gone by.

At first blush, this seems to be a fairly wide-reaching environmental assessment structure because the environmental projects to be assessed, as set out in clause 5 of the bill, are very wide ranging and include almost everything where a federal authority is involved. But the first thing that strikes me is if the intent in drafting this clause 5 was to prevent the federal government from intervening where, in the interests of the peace, order, and good government of Canada, it should be intervening in projects that have an effect both interprovincially and within a province. The heritage that we have—

[*Translation*]

The heritage of Canadians is too important to be left only to the provinces.

[*English*]

If we have the power under the peace, order, and good government provisions of the Constitution Act of Canada, as we do, according to the Supreme Court of Canada, for example, to impose mandatory wage and price controls in order to prevent inflation, then surely the federal government will acknowledge that it has the power under the same provisions to intervene in development projects which are going to be environmentally harmful. Yet I do not see even a wish on the part of the