

*Private Members' Business*

committed to taking the actions necessary to make sustainable development a reality. While some may say that it is merely a symbolic vote in light of the fact that the environment minister has already stated his intention to present legislation before this House, we as politicians are fully aware of the importance of such symbolic measures.

When legislation as requested in this motion is presented to this House, certainly I will gladly stand in my place and discuss its substance. In the meantime, I look forward to the opportunity to lend my support to Motion No. 485 as amended. I ask that all members join me in seeing that this motion is passed.

**Mr. Brian L. Gardiner (Prince George—Bulkley Valley):** Madam Speaker, I too am pleased to rise in support of this motion and in particular the amendment that was made by the hon. member. I have some comments I would like to make given the introduction of this motion. Some of the members have talked about rhetoric. Of course we have heard a great deal of that from the government in terms of the environment and environmental assessment in particular.

In question today is a motion that if passed will certainly give direction to the government to legislate an environmental assessment review process. It would be made mandatory and would allow the review of projects under federal jurisdiction; in a sense going through those projects to see that they are environmentally sound, socially sound and economically sound.

While I support the motion there are some areas in it that I think could be strengthened. We will certainly see, if and when the minister introduces the legislation, if it is included. I am referring in particular to questions about the independence of an environmental assessment review process, about the kind of criteria that an EARP, a review process would have to consider, especially when we have to take into question ecosystems that go beyond one particular river or one particular stream.

The case of the massive expansion of pulp mills in northern Alberta is a perfect example of impact going beyond one particular area and having tremendous negative impact across northern Alberta and indeed into the territories.

As well, I am concerned about the need to ensure and in fact to guarantee that there is funding to intervene groups, native groups, environmental groups, trade unions and chambers of commerce, so that they have an opportunity to participate and prepare the necessary studies. When all groups have such an opportunity, we know and we can be assured that we will get a better project and that industry or government departments initiating projects will know clearly what are those guidelines and how to proceed.

All too often government departments and industry think that inviting the neighbours over for some coffee and doughnuts is an adequate environmental assessment review. I reject that. I think the reason we have adequate assessment procedures is so that all questions can be considered fairly and adequately and so that the right input can be provided to the various government departments which will be dealing with the particular project.

• (1740 )

Frankly I was particularly concerned by the comments from the member for Parry Sound—Muskoka. I appreciate his support for the motion, but we should take into account the time that this government has had, this born again government now concerned about the environment, to consider environmental assessment. We now hear that a final draft of the environmental assessment legislation has yet to be prepared. Cabinet has not even considered it.

The evidence is clear in our forestry committee. When we asked the minister of forests what will the impact be of this environment minister's new legislation on assessment and perhaps on pulp mills in Alberta, he remained silent.

Now we know the reason. It is that this government has not even yet considered draft legislation to present to the House for environment assessment. Members opposite talk about rhetoric. That is all we have been getting. We have not been getting the kind of action we require in the House to deal with the environmental assessment we need.

A perfect example of the need for a legislated environmental assessment process now—and I challenge the government and the minister to introduce that legislation before the Christmas break so that we can look at