

*Government Orders*

sideration. It should state that projects are to be fully reviewed and ensure that projects are scrutinized for sustainable development.

In clause 6 of the bill it states that:

(a) in the opinion of the responsible authority the project is described in an exclusion list.

It sounds straightforward but it could lead to improper discretionary decision by a minister of the Crown. The key is that the opinion of the minister is sovereign and not a statute, and that again speaks to my particular concern about the wholeness of this bill.

In clause 11(3) we say that the scope of the environmental panel study will be determined by the responsible authority, the minister under which the responsibility of the project falls. This clause would be strengthened considerably if this responsibility were conferred on the Minister of the Environment. We have any number of ministers making decisions about whether or not a project will go to a panel and just how that environmental panel will determine its authority. I believe that the scope of the bill must be changed to provide for mandatory environmental assessment of projects.

Section 34 outlines clearly that if a responsible minister can justify the impact of a project, no matter how adverse, the project will be allowed to proceed. The discretionary power conferred by this bill in the responsible authority is a major flaw that could reduce the effectiveness of other parts of the legislation. In general, it leaves far too much room for industrial and business lobbies to influence the responsible authority to make a decision that would be contrary and detrimental to Canada's environmental protection objectives.

The Minister of the Environment was stating in his earlier remarks that one of the intents of the new proposal, Bill C-78, is to have in place clear, consistent and predictable outcomes. I would say that we have just the opposite, that what we would be approving if we went ahead with this bill is an assessment process which would be entirely unpredictable, inconsistent, totally dependent upon the discretion of whatever minister was in charge of a project.

I believe that in many ways this bill is going by us, it looks like a sheep but in fact it is a wolf in sheep's clothing. If a project were to get to the review panel stage, there are many things which I agree with in that process. However, even at the end of the review panel's deliberations on any particular project, that panel does

not have judicial, nor quasi-judicial function but can simply advise. I do not have a great problem with that aspect of it, however the fact that we cannot get the public panel review process without undergoing a very discretionary process is of particular concern to me.

If a project does go to the review panel process, one of the areas that again is of particular concern to me is that projects that are carried on and funded in whole or in part by the Canadian government overseas can be exempt from environmental assessment under this legislation. I believe that in Canada we must view all aspects of the environment in terms of the picture that was taken by NASA of our planet earth some years ago. Mr. Speaker, if you look at that image in your mind you can see that the environment knows no such thing as political boundaries.

What happens in other countries of the world affects us. What happens to the environment in Third World countries can affect our environment here in Canada. I think it is absolutely necessary that we apply the same standards overseas as we do in Canada. We cannot penalize countries in the Third World with assessments that do not equally apply here in Canada. I believe that Canada must break out and set the example. An environmental assessment review process is equally important to all of our projects abroad as they are in Canada.

It is very important that we have public participation in all of the environmental assessments that we undergo and in our regulations. I think that we must make sure that when we are able to do environmental assessments overseas that we make allowances for public input to that process.

As I said, I am very concerned that there are going to be special regulations set aside for international projects, projects funded in full or in part by the Canadian government. We will be allowing environmental degradation to continue in the Third World which not only affects populations living in the Third World but affects us as well. We all must be very concerned about this.

• (1540 )

Poverty is understood to be a leading cause of environmental degradation. I think that we must attack environmental degradation internationally from the grassroots level, dealing with individuals and the situations in which they find themselves. We must apply appropriate environmental technologies to ensure that people in the Third World are given the opportunity to live a better