

with the necessity for using what resources we have and can afford to assist other nations that are less well off than we are to enable them to increase their economic standard of living and quality of life; I mention this only in the context of what we should be doing for our own municipalities.

The Chairman: Order. I regret to interrupt the hon. member but the time allotted to him has expired. The hon. member for Skeena did indicate that he would accept a question from the hon. member for Coast-Capilano. Does the committee give unanimous consent?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

● (12:40 p.m.)

Mr. St. Pierre: I listened with great interest to the hon. member's remarks concerning Indian reserves in British Columbia, and I know that the facts are as he states them. My question is, in view of the fact that the ADA agreement requires that initiative shall begin with provincial governments, and since the B.C. government resolutely refuses to take any initiative on behalf of Indian reserves anywhere in B.C., how can the member properly criticize this level of government when it is the other one which is refusing to assist the Indian reserves?

Mr. Howard (Skeena): Mr. Chairman, I would point out to my friend, the hon. member for Coast Chilcotin, my appreciation for putting this different dimension on what I was saying. It was not I who raised the ADA agreement, it was the Minister of Regional and Economic Expansion. Last night he said this was the valuable way his government and his department intended to tackle the problem. That is why I said he spoke a falsehood last night because he knows very well that no ADA agreement is going to provide these things. I just wanted to put this in context. I thank my hon. friend for pointing out how inept and calculatedly false the minister is.

An hon. Member: You didn't answer the question.

Mr. Barnett: Mr. Chairman, the hon. member for Skeena raised some questions that obviously require answers from the government. If we are being asked to establish a department of environment, Parliament should know what this department is going to do. We want to know whether there is any meat or substance to the powers conferred on the new ministry, and whether there will be the kind of authority which is being asked of Parliament in this particular case. We want to know whether there is going to be any meat or muscle in these words relating to the initiation of programs to improve the environment.

If the Minister of Fisheries and Forestry were here today, I am sure he would be in a position to confirm what I propose to say about one example of the kind of concrete step some of us think the government should take if the department of environment is to really per-

form the function the hon. member for Skeena mentioned in connection with the state of the fishing industry in British Columbia.

The clause we are dealing with makes reference to the fact that this minister has the authority, once this bill becomes law, to work in co-operation with other agencies, including provincial governments. I am sure the Minister of Fisheries and Forestry is as well aware as I am of the close interrelationship between industrial activities of the forest products industry in British Columbia and his responsibilities as the minister of fisheries. He must realize that what has been happening in British Columbia over a period of time has created a situation, and if we are going to restore and maintain the environment something of the order of \$100 million will be required to bring the streams in British Columbia back to the level of potential production of salmon they enjoyed in their natural state.

As my colleague said, the Minister of Fisheries and Forestry is not present at the moment. Undoubtedly, the President of the Treasury Board is assuming some responsibility for putting this bill through the House. I am sure he is familiar with the spending programs of the federal government. Perhaps he is the appropriate minister to answer some of these questions and to inform the House whether, if we give this power to a new minister, this department will be anything more than simply parliamentary window dressing.

This is the kind of information we should have. We should be informed about the effects of these programs on unemployment, and I have in mind particularly those people who are relatively unskilled in an industrial society. Many Indians possess skills which could usefully be put to work carrying out these programs. Is the government going to put \$100 million into the hands of the minister of environment in order that he might actually do something to improve the situation on the coast in relation to the environment in that part of Canada which was very productive in respect of Pacific salmon when it was inhabited only by Indians? This is the kind of question I think is germane to the discussion on this clause of the bill. Some spokesman, on behalf of the government should be in a position to provide real answers before we put the seal of parliamentary approval on this proposed measure.

I am sure that the whole question of preserving the environment in other parts of Canada is equally as important. It probably requires the same kind of financial muscle that is required to effectively deal with the deteriorating situation of the natural environment on the Pacific coast. Even though we are doing away with the fisheries part of the department's name, the minister does have responsibility for the sea coast and inland fisheries which the department of fisheries heretofore held. Let me emphasize the relationship between the proposal in this clause of the bill and the importance of useful and productive work. A fundamental question is involved which should be answered by the government before we pass this clause.