

Nuclear Liability

(Mr. McGrath) and the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles), who spoke on behalf of the hon. member for Broadview (Mr. Gilbert), for their intervention this afternoon. May I also thank hon. members for agreeing to let the bill be passed now so that, hopefully, with some dispatch in the other place the bill will be the law of the land before the summer recess. I thank the hon. member for St. John's East for his participation in the debate on second reading as well as for his contribution in the Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs. I also thank the hon. member for Broadview for the amendment he introduced, which was worked out co-operatively with the drafting officials of the Department of Justice.

There is among some of the experts dispute as to whether there is in fact a loophole, but I was happy to accept the amendment proposed by the hon. member for Broadview. In the event that there was a loophole, we hope we have been able to effectively fill it. That is why I am happy to see the amendment made.

With regard to the last remark of the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre, we have already been in communication with the provinces urging them to pass complementary legislation in connection with disclaimer clauses and cut-off clauses. I have received an encouraging response from some of them at least, and I will use all my persuasive efforts to get them to act. The hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre also has contacts with some provincial governments and provincial oppositions and I hope that he and his party members will do the same thing.

Motion agreed to and bill read the third time and passed.

NUCLEAR LIABILITY**MEASURE RESPECTING CLAIMS FOR DAMAGES CAUSED BY INCIDENTS**

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C-158, respecting civil liability for nuclear damage, as reported (with amendments) from the Standing Committee on National Resources and Public Works.

Hon. J. J. Greene (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources) moved that Bill C-158, respecting civil liability for nuclear damage, as reported (with amendments) from the Standing Committee on National Resources and Public Works, be concurred in.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Speaker: When shall the said bill be read the third time?

Some hon. Members: By leave, now.

Mr. Greene moved that the bill be read the third time and do pass.

Mr. G. H. Aiken (Parry Sound-Muskoka): Mr. Speaker, we are quite prepared to let this bill pass on third reading, but since there was no debate on the report stage I should like to add a few reservations to what was said in the committee. This bill dealing with nuclear liability is admittedly a measure that has never had any testing. The type of insurance offered here has never been proposed before. The committee laboured quite long and hard over the matter and heard a lot of witnesses on the question of insurance for civil liability from nuclear damage. Several things came out of the committee by way of amendments which are now included in the bill and which certainly improve the measure. There were a number of other suggestions made which the committee did not adopt, but since the bill is an interim measure it will require further consideration as time goes on. However, I think the committee did the best it could with a new type of government-backed insurance, and as amended by the committee we hope it will meet the need. I merely rise to say that I will not be surprised if the bill does require further amendment as time goes on.

Mr. Randolph Harding (Kootenay West): Mr. Speaker, may I say a few words on this piece of legislation. Our committee spent a great deal of time on the bill, devoting at least 12 full meetings to it. I agree with the last speaker that we had a pretty thorough discussion. A number of the groups appearing before the committee were not too happy with the legislation as now drafted, but after hearing the general evidence and the evidence of members of the justice department the committee felt inclined to go along with the drafting that they had presented to the committee, though I still have one or two doubts about several parts of the legislation.

Sometimes a layman is faced with pretty tough decisions to make when on the one side there is a great deal of legal talent telling you that everything is okay, and on the other side there is an equal amount of talent telling you that some of the definitions are not too clear. This is what the members of the committee were up against when this legislation was before them. I am satisfied that basically the legislation is good, though we might have to make some changes to it another year, as the