

Water Resources Programs

vention or agreement with respect to such export shall be binding unless authorized by the parliament of Canada."

and by renumbering the subsequent clause accordingly.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I think it is probably a curiosity when at the report stage of this very important measure—probably one of the two or three most important measures we have to consider in this Parliament—I find that even though my proposed amendment is number 25 on the list I am speaking second. That is the way things go. The point my hon. friend has raised, which I shall raise and which will be raised when the House turns its attention to Motion No. 25, I think is one of the most important points we can make in this session of Parliament. May I say first of all that I believe at the report stage we are caught in a rather curiously anomalous position for parliamentarians. This situation did not exist before the new rules came into effect. Previously, we could try to make points without necessarily being bound by the exact wording of the amendments being suggested. But now, we not only have to make our points in substance, but have to make them in form.

When I say we have to make them in form, I mean that we have to make them in wording which fits into the general tenor of the bill and in a form which does not offend the general principles of parliamentary draftsmanship. I point this out because when my friend to my left presented his proposal originally, it seemed to me to be like a king Canute proposal; in other words, thou shalt not allow the water to advance. Instead of arguing that the inland waterways not be diverted for the purpose of export, I think he used the phrase "inland waters not be transported". Perhaps I am wrong, but knowing the water rolls ceaselessly onward, the words were such that one could not possibly accept the principle he was trying to put forward. Nonetheless, the basic substance of the amendment suggested by my friend is something which I think one can really accept. It is something I have tried to put into words for our consideration but in a different way. The point which I think is being established here is that Canada, which has one-quarter or one-fifth of the fresh water resources in the world, should not barter away that treasure for any minor consideration.

• (4:30 p.m.)

We know that because of the growth of our neighbours to the south they have a great

need for things that they cannot possibly produce or do not have. One of the crying needs of the United States is fresh, drinkable water, and it is to this obvious need that U.S. statesmen are giving their thoughts and their consideration. They are looking around for an alternative for their people. Where can they find it? Where is there a possible source to satisfy this need? The obvious answer is, Canada. Good, drinkable water is undoubtedly one of our greatest assets. It is something the United States does not have and something over which a bargain can be struck. I am sure that they are looking at us avidly, perhaps I should say thirstily, to find an answer to their problem.

I think this is a fact which should be put right on the table so that we know what we are up against, and so that they know that we know what we are up against. The motions to amend this bill are before the House. We want an assurance that when we are dealing with waters that flow from this country to another country, and which are part of our natural resources, they are being dealt with wisely and properly, that they are not being bartered or given away. We know they are part of the richness of this country and that without them the people on the other side are at a disadvantage.

The reason that my friend and I want our motions dealt with in the House is that we hope the united voice of Canada will say, "yes, we have an asset; we are a good neighbour but we do not barter away freely or cheaply what we have." We make our point and we make it as Canadians. In that spirit I hope that the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Greene) will adopt one or the other proposal or both of them, and that we will assert our sovereignty over what is really becoming one of the rarer assets and one that is priceless in this world.

[Translation]

Mr. Léonel Beaudoin (Richmond): Mr. Speaker, I just want to say a few words about the bill and the two amendments which, I think, should be made to it.

It is most important to ensure the conservation of waters, to keep them as clear as they are in some Canadian waterways. Sound conservation calls for the inclusion in the bill of a restrictive and mandatory provision regarding the diversion or export of waters.