

Government Orders

commitment that was not made by our government but was made by the Liberal government in the early seventies. That is exactly what it said it was going to do. That is exactly what this government is doing: assuring that programming is going to continue there, assuring that the parks are going to be for the people of Toronto and attempting to get the buildings that were scheduled to go on the waterfront, off the waterfront.

That is what this is all about. It has absolutely nothing to do with getting rid of Harbourfront, as was mentioned by a number of metro Toronto members on the Liberal side who did not know what they were talking about at the time. They obviously have not read the David Crombie report and its recommendations. They have not seen the subsequent report that came from the provincial government, referred to as the Allen report.

The hon. member, who I know has not read either one, should have taken time to understand exactly what the Government of Canada was doing with Harbourfront. In fact, it is ensuring its longevity in providing excellent programming for the citizens of Toronto. That is what this is all about. He should not be standing here spouting off this nonsense about the privatization of Harbourfront. He should get his facts right before he stands up in this House and makes statements that are totally inaccurate.

Mr. Kaplan: Mr. Speaker, the minister has said one thing that I have to tell him I agree with. I have not read the Ontario government's report on the Crombie report, but I have read the Crombie report. I would like to give the minister some news. I do not agree with it. That is why we are standing up opposing a recommendation that the federal government abandon Harbourfront.

I would like to challenge the minister on the commitment which he says he has given to see that programming is maintained at Harbourfront. Where is that commitment given? It is certainly not in the bill. How do we know—

Mr. McDermid: It was just given.

Mr. Kaplan: The minister may feel that statements by ministers are the same thing as appropriations and commitments. I will tell him that they are not. If he were prepared to stand, give that kind of commitment, put it

in writing and put it as a legally binding undertaking, I would at least concede to him that he was assuring that the Harbourfront, although it would lose the federal contact that I think is so important, programming itself would continue.

I want to tell the minister something else. When he says that the citizens are so happy to get it back, it happens that I was at city hall in the city of Toronto when it was debated about whether they wanted it back, whether they could afford to take it back. It is a very controversial question. They do not look on this as a gift from the federal government. They look at it as a commitment to come up themselves with \$150 million to try to maintain programming to which the minister says he is prepared to make a commitment.

The minister will never persuade me that somehow or other Canada benefits from turning this project over to the city, but he could persuade me that Harbourfront will survive by bringing forward an amendment which only the government can do, because it involves an appropriation of funds, to assure that the new Harbourfront in the hands of the city of Toronto will continue to be supported.

[*Translation*]

That is a commitment I would be ready to recognize as a real commitment from the Government of Canada. But I can see the minister in ten, five or three years' time when he is back in the private sector, as he surely will be. Let us say it is a commitment of the government. A commitment from a junior minister in the House of Commons is not good enough.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Other questions and comments? The hon. member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell.

[*English*]

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, first I congratulate my hon. colleague from York Centre on his excellent speech. I am sure all hon. members will agree that seldom has such wisdom been heard in this House. I want to ask my hon. colleague if he is as worried as I am about this government's attempts and attacks on the instruments of national unity that we have in this country.