

Supply

conflict and, on the other hand, that we must resolve that conflict through daring policies aimed at the future.

So, why this conflict, why this dilemma? There is a dilemma, Mr. Speaker, because we are in a period of economic development dating back in history more than 150 years and, suddenly, we would have to stop this development, to change radically the way the economy works. We know it is not possible, because the impact would be too disruptive and would not allow us to keep people employed, for example. Consequently, we have to make a transition and plan for the future, which means devising an energy policy which would anticipate the development of new forms of energy and would allow for a smooth but strong transition towards forms of energy more respectful of the environment.

• (1600)

[*English*]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: We will resume debate. A point of order, the Hon. Member for Port Moody—Coquitlam.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Waddell: Mr. Speaker, I want the consent of this House. Since the environment is such an important issue, could we put questions to the Minister of the Environment for ten more minutes and get answers from him?

An Hon. Member: He is a good minister!

[*English*]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The House has heard the terms of the request by the Hon. Member for Port Moody—Coquitlam (Mr. Waddell) to the effect that we would extend the question and comment period for 10 minutes for the Hon. Minister. Is there consent?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: We will give the first question to the Member for Port Moody—Coquitlam.

Mr. Waddell: Mr. Speaker, I might say in English, I have a comment and a question.

The Minister mentioned the Environmental Protection Act and he mentioned that we have to work with the provinces. I sat on that committee before he came to the House in the last Parliament for a couple of weeks. The Bill was really a very strong one. The then Minister, Mr.

McMillan, changed it quite dramatically because of the objections of the provinces.

I agree we have to live with the provinces because that is our system. The Bill, I think, fell in the cracks between the federal Government and the provinces. The Minister has to watch that. I think the public will demand strong action from the federal Government on the environment because it has real national power and some international clout to act. I ask the Minister to look at that.

I would trade with him in a minute to be the Environment Minister. What a chance he has. What a great portfolio it is. Why is he being a Minister who reacts to things rather than one who initiates? He reacted to the oil crisis. He had to. Suddenly there is an oil crisis there, but he reacted to it. He reacted to the toxic gasoline that was coming in from the United States. We understand that one has to react to crises, but why is the Minister not becoming a Minister who initiates?

Here is a perfect example, as the Hon. Member for Beaches—Woodbine (Mr. Young) has said. Here is a resolution. It is not quite motherhood; I will not call it that or use that expression, but it is almost. This is not a very radical proposition that we have put on the floor today, to reform our own House, our own Parliament, Parliament Hill, to make it environmentally conscious, if you like. We are going to set the trend. Why doesn't he as the Minister say, "We are going to support this. We are going to make it even better. We are going to take this initiative"? He could then be a Minister who initiates rather than reacts.

Mr. Bouchard (Lac-Saint-Jean): Mr. Speaker, this Government is not a reactive Government. It is easy for the Opposition to nag the Government and say, "Do this. Do that. This is not yet done. This river is dirty. Why didn't you clean up this river last year instead of reacting to our own protests and hesitations?" I do not think this is the way to deal with the environment. Yes, we must be bold. Yes, we must show the road to Canadians. Yes, we must have political courage, and we must prove it not by words but by budget and by tough decisions. Many of those things have been done now. We have much more to do. I understand that. I can understand ordinary Canadians who are watching their TV screens saying, "Well, this Minister, this Government, is reacting to the Valdez crisis."