

Government Orders

Cabinet decisions and government policies in general are exempted from the law. Although intervenor funding has been promised, it is not in the legislation so can easily be withdrawn. In addition, the level of funding is certainly not yet clear, if indeed it is available.

Crown corporations, such as CIDA and Export Development Corporation, are exempted and basic questions such as which projects will be reviewed, which ones will be exempt, and what rules will apply are not answered by this bill. This will be in the regulations that can easily be changed by cabinet.

These are all very important matters which have to be looked after before we can deal with this bill effectively in the House. We all know how much the public demands that the environment be paid its just due. Those demands are made, not because of personal fears. People are not out there collecting cans, glass and newspapers because they fear for themselves. They are making these sacrifices because of their care and concern for our earth, for our children who will inherit this earth when we are not here to say to them that we are sorry. It is the environmental assessment process, the protection that we put in law, that establishes the basis on which we can judge ourselves in the future. That is why this act is so crucial, and so important to the work we are doing today.

• (1630)

With that, I would like to bring my remarks to a close. In doing so, I would like to move an amendment to the motion on the floor. I would like to move this amendment, which I have written here for you, Mr. Speaker, seconded by the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands. I move:

That the motion be amended by deleting all the words after "that" and substituting the following therefor:

This House declines to give second reading to Bill C-78, an act to establish a federal environmental assessment process, because it fails to include provisions which would apply to all projects or undertakings under federal jurisdictions and it also fails to provide for intervenor funding.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): The Chair will take the amendment proposed by the hon. member under advisement. Resuming debate. Questions and comments. The hon. member for LaSalle—Émard.

[*English*]

Mr. Paul Martin (LaSalle—Émard): Mr. Speaker, I was very interested in the member's remarks. There is no doubt that we share a common view and a common vision as to how environmental assessment should be handled.

The hon. member spoke of his amendment at the very end of his remarks. I wonder if I could ask him to stand and elaborate as to the purpose of his amendment.

Mr. Taylor: Mr. Speaker, thanks to the hon. member for LaSalle—Émard. The amendment basically deals with things that are not a part of the legislation which should be a part of the legislation.

The very important matter before us here, as I indicated in my remarks, is primarily that there are a number of things not in place that should be in the legislation, that we would expect the prestudy committee to put into the legislation before it is brought into the House for debate at second reading so that all members of this Chamber would have an opportunity to debate the best possible piece of legislation that could come before us. There is no question in my mind that as long as we are left with this process that we have here now, in which we are dealing with a very flawed piece of legislation, we do not have the best opportunity in which to address the matters that are of concern to all of us.

Mr. Lee Clark (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member keeps referring to what he calls a prestudy committee that should take place before the bill comes into the House at second reading. I think the hon. member will realize, if he checks his records, that the special committee to which I think he referred was struck late last June when the bill was before the House at second reading. The bill entered the House at second reading toward the latter part of June and we are now continuing that process.

I also hope that the hon. member understands that the many witnesses to which he referred in detail in a study will, as is always the case, take place in legislative committee after second reading. That has been the case with each and every bill that has been before the House, and there is no reason to expect it would not be before the House in this particular case.