

I realize that many hon. members wish to speak on this bill, and I do not want to be accused of speaking too long. I support the bill; it has value and if passed could do a great deal to publicize this problem.

Mr. Louis-Roland Comeau (South Western Nova): Mr. Speaker, in the remaining ten minutes there is plenty of time to pass the bill. I am irritated by the fact that members who pretend to be great saviours with regard to pollution are opposed to everything that is presented in committee. The government is not aware of pollution; they are not aware that Canadians cannot swim in clean water and breathe clean air. The government has not put its money where its mouth is. If this bill makes the government aware of pollution, I think all hon. members should support it.

[Translation]

Mr. Eymard Corbin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries and Forestry): Mr. Speaker, before beginning my comments it would be advisable to read the bill now under consideration since the sponsor has refused to reveal to the House the reasons which led him to introduce that bill.

Bill C-25 which reads as follows:

An Act respecting Canadian National
Pollution Awareness Week

Her Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate and House of Commons of Canada, enacts as follows:

1. This Act may be cited as the *Canadian National Pollution Awareness Week*.
2. Throughout Canada, in each and every year, the second week in March shall be kept and observed under the name of Canadian National Pollution Awareness Week.

I wonder if members have taken the trouble of reading this bill. It is enlightening in certain respects and this is the question, Mr. Speaker, that I want to deal with this afternoon.

[English]

Mr. McGrath: Would the Parliamentary Secretary permit a question? If a private member presented a bill to set up little league baseball, would the government allow that bill to pass? Surely the Parliamentary Secretary is prepared to allow this bill, setting up a national pollution awareness week, to pass.

[Translation]

Mr. Corbin: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for St. John's-East has not quite understood the reason for my rising. I must indicate now that I fully support this legislation.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Corbin: I feel however that it could undergo certain changes for the better. If one considers the text a little more, one sees that the bill aims at the promulgation, by the federal government, of a Canadian National Pollution Awareness Week.

The English version is somewhat different, Mr. Speaker, for it reads:

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Canadian Pollution Awareness Week

In French the term used is "lutte" and in English "awareness". In my opinion, those are two different things. From the beginning, there is—although the purpose of the bill might be good and noble and the bill desirable and commendable—a contradiction in the drafting of the texts. Any committee to which the bill would be referred should first take the time to clarify the matter.

• (4:50 p.m.)

The object of the bill is obviously to draw the attention of the public to an important problem. That is the aim of any proclamation that seeks to reserve a day, a week or a month of the year to publicize a product or commemorate the day a man was born or passed away.

Mr. Speaker, these interruptions rising from all sides of the House disturb me somewhat.

As I was saying, the government has decided from time to time to set aside certain days, weeks or months during the year to emphasize something, to draw public attention to a problem and call on the public to commemorate something. However, I believe the government's objective is also to call the public's attention to its concern with such matters, which is very important.

I think we cannot say now that the government is not interested in anything regarding environmental pollution and conservation. In fact, the Minister of Fisheries and Forestry repeatedly demonstrated his concern in this field. This problem has been brought to our attention and we all recognize its urgency.

An hon. Member: Wrong!

Mr. Corbin: I dare say it is the chief concern of all nations today as evidenced by the many conferences being held on this matter. Every year, or every other year, these conferences grow in universality and in importance and even the United Nations are much concerned with the problems of environmental pollution and conservation.

Pollution affects water, air, the earth and forests and I believe the hon. member for Burnaby-Richmond-Delta (Mr. Goode) has tried to deal with the over-all pollution of our various environments.

With more time at my disposal, I could make a list of the efforts made at all levels of governments, provincial or municipal, and in other countries to fight pollution.

As I said, along with other members from all parties, this is a good bill. Some of us suggested that it would not make a great difference if we did not pass it. Of course, this is a matter of opinion.

The measure is desirable but I must say that in people's minds it would not add much, I think, to the seriousness of the problem affecting us all.

An hon. Member: Two minutes.

[English]

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): I rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I raise this point before five