

Supply

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Chair thinks that we should proceed with the Allotted Day and continue debate.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

SUPPLY

ALLOTTED DAY, S. O. 81—THE ENVIRONMENT

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Ms. Hunter:

That, in recognition of the importance of contributing to an environmentally sustainable future, it be an Order of the House that:

- (1) the Government introduce by September 30, 1989 an Act to require environmental assessment of major federal projects, programs and undertakings, such Act to provide for the appointment of an environmental officer of the House of Commons whose duties shall include the assessment of all practices of the House, and who shall be charged with the responsibility of reporting to the Speaker on ways in which the House can contribute to a safe and environmentally healthy future;
- (2) the Government table, within five sitting days of the first sitting day after June 30, 1989, its plans for the safe disposal of toxic wastes; and
- (3) the Government table by December 31, 1989 its plans to achieve minimal discharge of deleterious substances into Canadian fresh and coastal waters.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: When the House adjourned at one o'clock there were seven minutes left in the question and comment period on the speech of the Hon. Member for Hamilton East. The Hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment.

Mr. Clark (Brandon—Souris): Prior to the one o'clock adjournment, the Member for Hamilton East (Ms. Copps) had referred to the Bill introduced into Congress by Congressman Synar. I wish to make it very clear that no Minister of the Government in any way expressed opposition to the Bill. The individual in question who phoned Congressman Synar on June 1, Mr. Ross Glasgow, who is the First Secretary of environmental matters, indicated to the Congressman Synar or his officials, or to whomever he spoke, that the Government of Canada and the Embassy in Washington had no reservations with the principle of the Bill, but did express reservations about the extra-territorial nature of the Bill. That was the difficulty the Embassy officials were

expressing. That is the only reservation about the Bill that has been expressed by anyone on behalf of the Government of Canada.

Ms. Copps: I am a little confused. The Parliamentary Secretary states that the Embassy individual involved was not acting on behalf of any Minister. It is my understanding that when the Embassy calls, and in this particular case Mr. Glasgow stated that he was calling on behalf of the Ambassador, the Ambassador is a servant of the Government and he is acting on instructions either from the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Clark) or the Minister of the Environment (Mr. Bouchard).

I do not believe that the Ambassador picks up the phone and makes calls, or asks someone to make calls in relation to a piece of legislation, without having first checked on the Government's position with his political masters. The current Ambassador knows enough about government process that I am quite sure he was fully briefed by the Minister of the Environment and the Secretary of State for External Affairs before his First Secretary placed that call.

If I am to understand the Parliamentary Secretary, the Ambassador or the Embassy is somehow acting on their own. If they are not acting on their own, on whose behalf in the Government did they call to express their concerns about the legislation? Was it the Minister of the Environment, or was it the Secretary of State for External Affairs?

Mr. Clark (Brandon—Souris): The Minister of Environment (Mr. Bouchard) indicated in the House when this issue first arose that the officials in Washington were clearly not acting on the instructions of the Minister of the Environment. He made that very clear during the discussion in the House early last week.

The point I wish to make, and the question I wish to ask, is to indicate that that official expressed support for the principle of the Bill, but expressed reservations about the extra-territorial nature of the Bill. I would like to ask the Hon. Member again whether or not that Hon. Member and the Party she represents does not also share those reservations about the extra-territorial nature of Congressman Synar's Bill?