

*Water Resources*

This letter appears like the alarm call now raised by the Canadian population as a result of the educational campaigns that were conducted in the country by magazines such as the one that was mentioned before by my friend and of certain studies initiated by technicians and scientists. The time has come for the Canadian people to call for better understanding between provincial governments, and better co-operation with the municipal authorities so that at every level of government everyone might be able to bring, as soon as possible its own contribution, for the problem is urgent indeed. It is all very well to complain because some people are starving or killing each other for reasons beyond our understanding but we had better stop our idle talk and take effective steps in order to convince the other governments that they ought to work in harmony with us so as to answer this pressing problem which threatens to annihilate humanity as a whole.

The present bill is a first step, and a very important one, in the right direction since it encourages peace and understanding between the provinces. The municipalities affected by pollution should also have their say and the provincial governments should stop considering the representatives of the municipal administrations as poor relatives or simpletons.

**Mr. André Fortin (Lotbinière):** Mr. Speaker, first of all, I wish to make it clear that I am rising on a point of order, not to express my views on the bill.

I rise on a point of order and I want to draw the attention of the House to line 22 of the preamble of Bill C-144.

In order to explain my point of order, may I read in part the preamble of the bill. I quote:

*[English]*

And Whereas the Parliament of Canada is desirous that, in addition, comprehensive programs be undertaken by the Government of Canada and by the Government of Canada in cooperation with provincial governments,

● (3:00 p.m.)

*[Translation]*

Mr. Speaker, the French text reads as follows:

Et considérant que le Parlement du Canada souhaite, en outre, que des programmes d'ensemble soient entrepris par le gouvernement du Canada agissant seul ou en collaboration avec les gouvernements provinciaux...

My point of order is the following: in my humble opinion, the use of the particle "and"

in the English text and the particle "ou" (or) in the French text gives more power to the minister in one case, and that raises a problem with regard creates some to the interpretation of the powers granted.

Mr. Speaker, people might say that the powers conferred under a bill do not derive from the preamble; nevertheless, the fact remains that the bill itself follows from the preamble and that both make up a whole.

My point is this: Regarding the particle "and" in the English version, it is conjunctive. If I say apples "and" oranges, I add up. The particle "and" does not really offer any alternative. One thing is not automatically excluded by another when the particle "and" is used; on the contrary it is added to the other. The particle "and" excludes nothing.

As for the particle "ou" (or) in the French version, Mr. Speaker, it has an opposite effect. It adds nothing. You can choose one thing or another: apples or oranges.

The particle "or" really offers an alternative. It is one thing or another and not both at the same time. However, the minister could interpret the English version differently. As for the particle "or", it excludes an entity, while if the particle "and" is used and if one of the entities is chosen, the other is not necessarily excluded.

I will undoubtedly be told that those considerations deal with linguistics and syntax, but it seems to me that this is important since it is one of the basic principles of the bill and it is especially important because it defines the government policy outlined in Bill C-144.

Consequently, Mr. Speaker, the French text does not give the same definition of the power as the English text.

With all due respect, Mr. Speaker, I wish to point out that the words "by the Government of Canada" do not exclude possible participation by a third party which, non-officially or officially, could co-operate with the government in the application of this policy. In the French version, the exclusion is automatic. The words "par le gouvernement du Canada agissant seul" automatically exclude all provincial consultation or participation.

Mr. Speaker, it follows, in any event, that the minister, using one version or the other, could, to his advantage, work against the wishes of the provinces.

I wanted to rise on a point of order because, in my view, if one version rather than the other were invoked, this could