

Government Orders

see those regulations. The government would like that we all pass the legislation and that we all feel good about a new bill. Admittedly it is a better bill than the one that came before this House previously. It is a better bill in large part because of the work done by my colleague, the hon. member for The Battlefords—Meadow Lake.

But the fact remains that unless we can be guaranteed that the regulations will indeed live up to the legislation and that the regulations are really up to scratch, we might find ourselves regretting this spirit of co-operation somewhere down the line.

As I started to say earlier, I am told by material we have received from the Canadian Bar Association that the regulations would limit environmental assessment to nuclear reactors with a power capacity greater than 30 thermal megawatts. This would effectively remove from comprehensive study the Slowpoke reactors which Atomic Energy of Canada Limited has proposed for such densely populated and sensitive locations as hospitals and universities, for instance.

The fuel in such reactors is sufficient to cause very serious environmental and health damage if there were to be some kind of accident. It goes without saying, at least I thought it would, that such a proposal to build a Slowpoke reactor at the University of Ottawa, not far from these Parliament Buildings, ought to come under some kind of environmental assessment. But we hear that what the government intends is its usual collaboration, uncritical slavish collaboration with the nuclear industry.

As good a piece of environmental legislation as this is, the government will be able to go ahead and exempt Slowpoke reactors from any kind of assessment wherever it chooses. I just think that gives the lie to a lot of the rhetoric which has accompanied the passage of this legislation so far on the government side.

I just use that as one example. There are many others, but I think it should go without saying that the regulations ought to live up to the spirit of the bill. It is clear that we have reason to worry that they will not. Therefore we insist on the passage of this motion which would make sure that Parliament would have some handle on whether or not those regulations did indeed live up to the legislation.

Mr. Lee Clark (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, I would just like to take a few moments to speak to Motion No. 31, the amendment put forth by the hon. member for The Battle-

fords—Meadow Lake, and to indicate to the House, as I think most members know, that there is a very considerable amount of opportunity for consultation in the process with respect to regulations. Two of the most crucial regulations have already been presented to the committee in draft form, i.e. the law list and the comprehensive study list. It is anticipated that in fact four regulations may be finalized by the time the bill is eventually implemented.

The subsequent regulations will be proposed to the public as is normally the case. This process involves a considerable amount of public consultation and participation by all stakeholders. In fact I can report to you, Mr. Speaker, that meetings have already been held in some 15 cities throughout Canada as part of this multi-stakeholder consultation process. As a result of conversations I have had with some individuals who participated in the city of Regina, if I recall correctly, they as individual participants were very pleased with the process, encouraged by what they heard and pleased by the opportunity to be a part of the process.

I believe that the regulatory multi-stakeholder advisory committee is at work and provides all who are interested and who are concerned with a very real opportunity to be a part of that process.

In addition I would remind the House that any standing committee—and in this case the Standing Committee on the Environment would be the appropriate committee—has the opportunity to determine its own agenda and certainly to make proposed regulations a part of that agenda, if it so wishes.

We have done a very significant amount of consultation already. I am very familiar with the officials who are part of the process. They are well known to members of the House. The officials who work for FEARO and other officials working on behalf of the Department of the Environment are extremely conscientious in their desire to consult widely and to inform widely. I think members of the House would concur with that because the levels of consultation which have taken place during the course of our studies have been exemplary.

I believe there is a good process of consultation under way. I certainly would encourage the standing committee to place any proposed set of regulations on its agenda if it is at all so inclined, and I suspect it will be. I feel the legislation as proposed now does provide for an appropriate amount of consultation. I would encourage the