

This is why we ask the government in future to introduce subjects one by one so that we can discuss each of them thoroughly. At the present time, everything is camouflaged and the vote will prove unfair to us.

The Minister of National Defence (Mr. Macdonald) said this afternoon: You will vote in committee. What is a vote in committee worth? This is a joke. Nonetheless, the public wants to know whether elected members have voted for or against a clause to which they were opposed. With a bill like this, there is no way of knowing.

This being the case, we request that when such important matters as expenses exceeding one billion dollars are involved, they be divided into parts. Since the government rejects the idea, we shall oppose the bill.

As for part VII concerning the public service superannuation I am all for it. I am glad for the civil servants because they will be entitled to a pension at 60. They will even have the right, if they stop working before 60, to keep on contributing to get a full pension. I would like it if these provisions could also apply to old people: this would be interesting. For the last two or three years it has been requested that their pension be paid at 60. The pensioners agree. Unfortunately they have to wait until 65 to get their pension cheque while the civil servants who, incidentally, have had salaries of \$12,000, \$15,000, \$18,000, \$20,000 or \$24,000 per year will get their pension at 60. That is not so bad. I am glad for them. I am not against it but I wish old people could get their pension at 60 and that their spouse could get it too, whatever his or her age. This would be justice. There is discrimination against part of our society. All our citizens should be granted the same treatment if the so-called just society is to be achieved. Legislation should be extended to our senior citizens and then the Canadians will be satisfied.

Mr. Speaker, my time is running out.

One might wonder how I would vote on this bill. After all I said, Mr. Speaker, one will realize I am on the horns of a tremendous dilemma. This is why even though I support without reservation certain parts of the bill, some other parts keep me from approving it in its entirety. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I will cast my vote against this bill.

[English]

**Mr. Robert C. Coates (Cumberland-Colchester North):** Mr. Speaker, in participating in the debate on this bill which does a number of things may I first commend the government for tackling the very serious problems relating to the environment. Responsibility for these matters has up to this time been scattered among numerous departments. That responsibility in the main will now be concentrated under one minister and one department which is to be known as the department of the environment. I wish the new minister who will assume these substantial responsibilities the very best fortune in his efforts to deal with many of the serious problems that face this nation in so far as pollution is concerned.

● (9:00 p.m.)

I shall place on record some facts about a very serious situation that exists in my constituency in the province

#### *Government Organization Act, 1970*

of Nova Scotia. I wish to make all hon. members fully aware of this situation which is probably unique in Canada. It is the type of uniqueness that the residents of the coal mining town of Springhill would like to have eliminated as soon as possible. That town is faced with a critical pollution problem that endangers the health of its 7,500 residents. I would describe the situation as nothing less than a national disgrace which has been allowed to go on and on. I think it would be of value to the minister and hon. members to have some background information regarding this situation.

Springhill was a mining town. It suffered two calamitous disasters in 1956 and 1958 which took the lives of many miners. The only two employers in that community were eliminated. For some time the people of that community had grave doubts about the future. I am sure this was the case with people all across this country, because Canadians everywhere rallied behind the brave people of Springhill. People all across Canada, including the provincial government of Nova Scotia, assisted the people of that community in many ways. As a result, Springhill has developed a very good industrial base. The federal government can take the credit; it established a very substantial minimum security penal institution which provides a good deal of employment for the people of the community.

Because Springhill had been a coal mining community for a long time, a very large mine-dump developed. The waste products from the mining operations were deposited in the dump. To give some idea of the extent of this mine-dump, I would say that it covers between 45 and 50 acres of land in the midst of the community. About 1960 a fire started in this huge mine-dump. At that time it was not very serious. Although some efforts were made to put out the fire, it continued to burn. The burning became more and more extensive. Today it covers almost all the 45 to 50 acres of land. The fire continued because the dump contained a great deal of coal. I understand that between 10 per cent and 15 per cent of the mine-dump is coal. The fire penetrated deeper and deeper into the mine-dump. I am told that at the present time the fire is burning at a depth of between 40 and 60 feet. The fumes from the fire have started to rise and on a windy day, especially on a humid day, the fumes cover the whole of the town.

We hear a great deal about the bad effects of smog in the cities of Los Angeles and New York. More recently we have heard it associated with the cities of Montreal and Toronto. Unless one visits the town of Springhill on a windy or humid day you do not realize how dense are these fumes or how hazardous they are to the health of those who live in the community. It might well have caused the death of some residents of Springhill. I have no doubt that it has stopped industries locating there. If an individual who is considering locating a plant visited Springhill on a day when the smog is in existence, he would have second, third and maybe fourth thoughts about locating there and asking his employees to suffer what could be a very hazardous health problem.

For the past five years the people of Springhill have been trying to have this mine-dump fire extinguished.