

Clean Air Act

but I directed an urgent question to the Minister of Fisheries and Forestry and I did not get a reply. In order to emphasize its urgency, I point out that the fishermen in question have threatened to take up arms against foreign draggers because they are destroying their livelihood. I wonder if I could obtain an answer to the question I asked the minister.

Mr. Speaker: No doubt the hon. member realizes that the question period expired more than five minutes ago. The Chair made a desperate effort to allow more hon. members to ask questions by voluntarily extending the question period for a few minutes. The hon. member has raised a very important matter. Perhaps, with unanimous consent, the minister might be allowed to reply.

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Hon. Jack Davis (Minister of Fisheries and Forestry): Mr. Speaker, this is the first that I have heard of this incident. If it is as serious as the hon. member says, then of course we will act immediately.

Mr. Speaker: Orders of the day.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

CLEAN AIR ACT

MEASURE RELATING TO AMBIENT AIR QUALITY AND CONTROL OF POLLUTION

The House resumed, from Friday, February 19, consideration of the motion of Mr. Davis that Bill C-224, relating to ambient air quality and to the control of air pollution, be read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Forestry.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The first order of business this afternoon is the motion for second reading and reference of Bill C-224, an act relating to ambient air quality and to the control of air pollution. If I may remind hon. members of the present state of affairs, the debate has been concluded on this motion but the putting of the question was deferred until a ruling had been made on a point of order raised by the hon. member for St. John's East (Mr. McGrath). The Chair has heard representations from various hon. members and is now in a position to render a decision.

If I may state to the best of my ability the point raised by the hon. member for St. John's East, it is that Bill C-224 should not be proceeded with at this time because a clause in the bill would prejudice an amendment also moved by the hon. member for St. John's East during consideration in committee of the whole of Bill C-207, an act respecting the organization of the government of Canada.

[Mr. Marshall.]

It seems to me that the ancient rule of Parliament is that the House should not be put in a position where contrary decisions are made in respect of two similar bills. It is, of course, a fact that a final decision has yet to be taken on Bill C-207. However, the House has given second reading to Bill C-207 and has referred it to Committee of the Whole. That decision is not in question at this time.

It is clear to me that at the moment no decision has been taken by the House in relation to any particular clause or section of the government organization bill. Similarly, no decision has been taken by the House in relation to any particular clause of Bill C-224. This point was made clear, for the guidance of the Chair and of all hon. members, by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles). There is, therefore, in my view nothing procedurally wrong in having before the House at the same time concurrent or related bills which might be in contradiction with one another either because of the terms of the proposed legislation itself or in relation to proposed amendments.

May I again refer to the contribution of the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre to the procedural argument. The hon. member's contribution is reported at page 3584 of last Friday's *Hansard*. I quote as follows:—we are not passing this bill at this point.

The hon. member was referring, of course, to the bill now before us, Bill C-224.

We are only debating a motion for second reading and the referral of the bill to committee. If we were at the third reading stage and were passing a bill that had within it a clause which was inconsistent with some other bill that had been passed, their point would be valid and I would be backing it.

Of course, at this point the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre was referring to the point made by the hon. member for St. John's East and, I believe, the hon. member for South Western Nova (Mr. Comeau). The hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre went on to say:

But that is not the case. We are not passing a bill. We are considering proposed legislation and the likelihood is that there are a number of details in it which members may not like or which they may find offensive. However, for the life of me—

That refers to the hon. member's life and not to mine.

—I cannot see any point of order in respect of the propriety of the bill as a whole, which is what the hon. member for St. John's East has asked Your Honour to find.

The point made by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre appears to be well taken. I must conclude that the question on the motion for second reading and referral to the standing committee can now be put to the House. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the said motion?

Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Forestry.