

I have two brief questions to pose to the Hon. Member. First, what financial and human resources does Environment Canada intend to devote to the enforcement of this Act? Second, does he feel that Environment Canada's new attitude about enforcement means the end of the collaborative approach with industry which the Government has had in the past?

Mr. Redway: Mr. Speaker, I thank the Hon. Member for his questions and his kind reference. He may recall that at the time the Minister introduced this Bill for first reading in June of this year he indicated that the Government had agreed to commit some new money for enforcement of this legislation, something in the vicinity of some \$37 million, which was not there before. This is in addition to the funds already in the Department of the Environment and in other Departments, which will be called upon to enforce environmental legislation. Some \$37 million of new money was committed to beef up the enforcement provisions and allow for the hiring of new inspectors and enforcement officers. That is a very strong commitment to making sure this legislation is strongly enforced.

● (1220)

So far as the consultative process is concerned, certainly it is quite clear the Government intends to continue that process with the provinces and industry. There is no intention whatsoever to ride roughshod over other people. If you can obtain rapid compliance in the first place, that is the best way to do it, rather than getting into long harangues and struggles at constitutional conferences, federal-provincial conferences, or meetings between Ministers. It is much better to consult and try and work out common ground. The Government is committed to that principle and the legislation embodies that principle.

Mr. Orlikow: Mr. Speaker, I recognize the difficulty of the Hon. Member when I asked my question, but I ask him to think about the situation in New Brunswick. It is a poor province which has to try and encourage as much development as it can. Yet it is run almost as a feudal empire by the Irvings. They have continuously flouted, ignored or rejected any attempts by the province, or I suppose the federal Government, to make them live up to any kind of environmental standard. If the provinces are to be consulted, is there not a danger that nothing will be done?

Mr. Redway: Mr. Speaker, as the Hon. Member knows from examining the Act, it provides tremendous penalties for polluting. It provides not only for fines but jail terms of up to life imprisonment. Environmental offences are now being treated for the first time as serious offences.

Mr. Orlikow: I would love to see one of the Irvings in jail.

Mr. Redway: The Hon. Member knows that provisions are in place to take firm and strong action, and I know he will be

holding the Government accountable to make sure that is done. I can assure him that I will as well.

[Translation]

Mr. Jacques Guilbault (Saint-Jacques): Mr. Speaker, I would also like to add my grain of salt and take part in this debate on Bill C-74. In the first place, I should like to point out that the Opposition welcomes Bill C-74, I would not say joyfully since its scope is limited, but we acknowledge that it is a step in the right direction. I will now reply immediately to the question asked by my colleague from York East (Mr. Redway) upon completing his comments a while ago; he said he hoped the Opposition parties would pass that Bill quickly in the House of Commons and send it to a committee. The reply to this is: yes of course. However, this being said I would like to put things back into their context.

We should not imagine that this Bill is a cure-all that will solve all our environmental problems. On the contrary, considering that it is the first bill dealing with environment which the Government has deigned to table in the House of Commons at the beginning of the fourth year of its term of office, we cannot say in the first place that it is too soon. We have been waiting such a long time for the Government to do something about the environment and nothing had been done till Bill C-74 was tabled. Secondly, the environmental problems faced by Canadians are tremendous. The Bill is very narrow in its enforcement; in fact, to be realistic it only deals with a small part of our problems. Indeed, it will be regulating the new toxic chemicals which could enter the market place. We should not then exaggerate and suggest that it is a great feat.

[English]

It is not the big thing that Ministers would like Canadians to believe. It is not the best invention since sliced bread. It is not bad. It is a step in the right direction. I tell my friend from York East, yes, we will vote for the Bill. My God, if we did not, what else would we be voting for in this Parliament in this area? Nothing else has come before the House.

I am going to describe some of the things this Bill does not do and that Canadians would like to see it do. I do not have to spend much time heralding its virtues. They are not too numerous, and besides, my friend from York East has been on his feet doing just that. He focused his remarks on compliance. I heard the words "compliance" and "enforcement" about 20 or 30 times. He is very honest in doing that because that is what the Bill does. It does nothing else.

For example, this Bill is not going to clean up the environment. When he completed his remarks, my friend said something about if opposition Parties are serious about cleaning up the environment. That is the only mistake he made in his speech. He is always very honest, but that was a bit of overkill. This will not remove the blob in the St. Clair River. This will not remove toxic pollution lying at the bottom of the St. Lawrence River which I can look at from my riding. I remember the Minister in Montreal calling the St. Lawrence