

*Government Orders**[English]*

**Mr. Milliken:** Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. I would hate to allow this to be a precedent. I realize the argument could be made that the government by moving the motion has thereby been deemed to have spoken.

The rule is quite clear. I believe it is Standing Order 76 which states that the first two speakers are to be allowed 40 minutes each. I am not suggesting that the hon. member for Labrador is going to go on for anything more than possibly 10 minutes. He is a very concise and erudite speaker and he will not need 40 minutes to express his views on this bill.

On some future bill that is perhaps more contentious, I think there is an argument to be made that 40 minutes is an appropriate length of time.

I would like to reserve the point to argue this at another time. I do not think it is appropriate today because I do not want to make a mountain out of a molehill but I am concerned that the right to speak for 40 minutes is an important one. The rule is quite clear, I suggest, for the first two speakers.

*[Translation]*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois):** The Chair was of course careful to check this technical aspect. The first speaker was for the government and is deemed to have spoken, even if he did not actually do so. The government presented a motion to table this bill. So that was the first speaker, and his 40 minutes speaking time has expired, although technically, the 40 minutes were really only 15 seconds.

In any case, I can reconsider and check again with the staff of the House regarding the opinion expressed by the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands, who is an expert on the Standing Orders of the House. However, this is the information I have so far. Consequently, I am prepared to recognize, for not more than 20 minutes, the hon. member for Labrador, even if it means checking again.

*[English]*

**Mr. Murphy:** Mr. Speaker, on the same point of order. As the member for Skeena just pointed out it was a rather unusual procedure that happened last night as a

result of rushing into this bill and it created a few problems for the House.

Speaking on behalf of our caucus, we would certainly be willing to give unanimous consent to allow the member 40 minutes if he needs that time.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois):** I am the servant of the House. Is there unanimous consent to give 40 minutes to the next speaker? I have no objection.

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

**Hon. William Rompkey (Labrador):** Mr. Speaker, I assure you and my colleagues that I will be able to confine myself to 20 minutes.

I am pleased to have the opportunity today to speak in this second reading debate on Bill C-51, the Northwest Territories Waters Act and Bill C-52, the Yukon Waters Act.

I am pleased to indicate on behalf of my party our support in principle for these bills. These bills replace the Northern Inland Waters Act which was passed by this House in 1970 and came into force in 1972. They modernize and update the water management regimes in northern Canada.

• (1100)

The Northern Inland Waters Act was developed to protect and conserve the water resources of Yukon and the Northwest Territories. At the time the bill was introduced it seemed as if the north would be undergoing some major resource development. The bill's objective was to prevent environmental damage from development.

I will quote from the second reading speech of the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development at that time, whom I am sure the House will recognize. He said:

Major industrial development is about to get under way north of 60. By acting now, this region can be spared the disasters of environmental mismanagement that now plague other parts of Canada.

By acting with determination and decisiveness today, we may ensure that 20 or 30 years from now we will not be faced with settling another tremendous debt as the price of indifference and mismanagement of the water resources of the north.

That minister is now the Leader of the Official Opposition.