

ment could be involved. The co-ordinating committee could apply itself with determination and expertise in helping "one industry-small town-unorganized communities" face the crisis of a closure. I would think that such a co-ordinating committee should be activated by an order in council. Having assessed the situation, one minister could be designated to press the button in cabinet which would get the committee functioning. It does not need to be a continuing committee or a big costly operation, but it could exist interdepartmentally and include people from the private sector so that when such a problem comes into existence, an order in council could be made to establish and give authority to a committee to help these communities.

I conclude by saying that what my friend, the hon. member for Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke, has proposed is an admirable motion. I am delighted to support it. It is a step in the right direction, and I hope it will have the approval of the House.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Does the hon. member wish to ask a question?

Mr. Jupp: Mr. Speaker, I have a question of privilege. I am used to being insulted in the course of my political career, but no one has yet called me a bookkeeper. I would ask the hon. member to withdraw that remark. If one lets those kinds of comments go by in this House, the next thing that could happen is one might be called an economist. If one lets that go by then one could be called a lawyer and so on. I would like to have that comment withdrawn.

Mr. Penner: Mr. Speaker, I rise on the same point of privilege. Once again the hon. member has failed to listen to what another hon. member has said. Nobody called him a bookkeeper. I have no idea what he does or what he ought to be doing. I said in his contribution that he was presenting to this House a bookkeeper's approach, and that is a little bit different.

Mr. Joe Reid (Parliamentary Secretary to Postmaster General and Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, I rise for the first time in this honourable and distinguished House.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Reid (St. Catharines): I find it a privilege to come here, but having served a goodly number of years in matters of local administration and having served on local government, I find it preferable to address myself to matters of debate of a specific nature.

Local government is an area of government where many of us here have served people of communities for many years in a variety of ways. I come here with the full intent, having once served the people of my community, of now addressing myself to the Canadian community, and addressing myself from wherever I sit or stand in what I consider the national interest.

I am somewhat inclined to sympathize with the proponents of this motion, but it is rather ironic it comes before us at a time when Bill C-3 is on the order paper. Bill C-3 is about to

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make major changes in the program of grants in lieu of taxes. I suggest to all members of this House that that bill will be of benefit to local municipalities. There is no doubt in my mind, Mr. Speaker, that the impact as presented by the proponents of the bill, does change one's lifestyle.

Those who have had to meet budgetary requirements within time periods know what changes come about when there is a change in the assessment rolls by reason of a discontinuance of a major activity, be it an industry, or an institution of governmental change. But that institution came to the municipality concerned, as has already been said, practically at the urging of the municipality. While it leaves an impact, there is no good reason why the federal government should be locked in and be subject to rules and regulations not applicable to other taxpayers or grantors in their particular areas.

May I be so bold as to suggest to the hon. member for Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke (Mr. Hopkins) that he might better be advised to address himself to Bill C-3 and the Municipal Grants Act when that bill is being discussed before the committee.

The existing program of grants to municipalities in lieu of property taxes is already a substantial item to this country of ours, amounting to about \$148 million in the case of department-owned property, and an added \$110 million from Crown corporations.

Under the new government bill, grants on departmental properties will be increased by \$25 million by bringing into the grant program properties which are now excluded from the grant formula. This will benefit many municipalities across the country and it is a measure that I am sure will be supported by all members present.

This particular motion is unusual in that one of the parts of the country that will benefit most from this bill is the constituency of the hon. member for Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke. The federal government has a large defence base there, namely Canadian Forces Base Petawawa. At the present time, grants on this base apply to married quarters and land. Bill C-3 will remove this restriction and allow a larger tax base and for a larger grant in lieu thereof.

● (1800)

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I regret to interrupt the hon. member—

Mr. Peters: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, I know the hon. member for Niagara Falls—

Mr. Reid (St. Catharines): St. Catharines.

Mr. Peters:—excuse me, St. Catharines (Mr. Reid) is a new member. However, he is probably familiar with his party's decision not to kill these bills. Because he is a new member, maybe we can give him the benefit of not talking this bill out, by letting him resume his seat before we see the clock and calling it six o'clock.