

Public Works Act

Hon. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to have this opportunity to support the statements which have been made by the representatives of each of the other parties, but I would like to let the House know that I am pleased to be here today, and I am very happy to support this bill which is being passed today.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker): Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. Members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker): Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Motion agreed to, bill read the second time, considered in committee, reported, read the third time and passed.

Mr. Cosgrove: Mr. Speaker, as the debate on the bill progresses, I would be pleased to provide the hon. member with the ruling to which I am referring. I thought the reference I was making was commonly recognized by hon. members, but I will obtain the specific date of the ruling and make it available.

Having pointed out the context in which this legislation is introduced, I want to deal briefly with the proposed legislation. While I have said that, from a parliamentary perspective, they have been introduced—

Mr. Speaker, it appears that I should call it one o'clock.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker): It being one o'clock, I do now leave the chair until two o'clock this afternoon.

At one o'clock the House took recess.

AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 2:00 p.m.

Mr. Cosgrove: Mr. Speaker, in debating Bill C-91 which is before the House, a question was raised about the ruling of the Speaker to which I referred and a request was made that it be identified. I would refer hon. members to *Hansard* for June 12, 1981, at page 10546, where Madam Speaker said that Agriculture vote 30 and Department of Public Works vote L-70, among others, were not properly before the House and they were thereby ordered to be deleted therefrom. The effect of that ruling was that the vehicle for legislative support for the work which, as I have indicated, has been done for a number of years by the Department of Public Works had to be properly authorized by the House. Hence the amendments which are sought in this legislation before us today.

Before one o'clock I indicated that I was prepared to talk about the main body of the amendments that are sought. The amendments are minor from a parliamentary perspective, but they are nonetheless important to Public Works. They will ensure continuing progress in activities and projects affected by the legislation, and I hope without undue delay.

● (1410)

The first amendment to Section 9 of the Public Works Act will permit the department to perform work for other government agencies, including those which have statutory management of their own properties but may wish to use the services of Public Works. Although the department has for many years worked in such a capacity with many agencies, the incorporation of Canada Post highlighted a specific need, hence the legislation to clarify the role of Public Works. In order to allow Canada Post management and employees to concentrate on their particular mandate of efficient service, the corporation

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

PUBLIC WORKS ACT
PUBLIC LANDS GRANTS ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

Hon. Paul J. Cosgrove (Minister of Public Works) moved that Bill C-91, to amend the Public Works Act and the Public Lands Grants Act, be read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on National Resources and Public Works.

He said: Mr. Speaker, Bill C-91, which we have before us today, provides for minor amendments to important statutes administered by the Department of Public Works, namely, the Public Works Act and the Public Lands Grants Act.

Before discussing the technical aspects of the amendments, I want to touch briefly on a couple of points. First, I describe the amendments as housekeeping measures. I say that because they relate more to procedures of Parliament than to the policies and practices of the department. The main reason I say that is that in part they provide a general authority in a statutory way for departmental procedures which have been in use by the department from time to time over recent years. They were formerly executed under the authority of individual vote word changes as each case arose.

I am sure hon. members will recall a ruling of Madam Speaker approximately a year ago pointing out that these procedures were, from an administrative and House point of view, not acceptable, and it is as a result of that ruling that the changes we have before us were prepared in the form we have them here today.

Mr. Nielsen: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. If the minister has it available, I wonder if he could cite the ruling so that I might look at it.