

Government Orders

well as some government members turned out changes to this bill that indicated it was very seriously flawed.

We in the opposition have sought to bring forward amendments to improve the bill and make it more realistic and sensible. My very distinguished and capable colleague, the hon. member for Mount Royal, has proposed this amendment that would have Parliament review this bill after a five-year period. I cannot understand why the minister would not stand up at once and agree to such a sensible amendment to this bill.

Mr. Beatty: That is what happens when the hon. member is not in the House to listen to my speech.

Mr. Milliken: He says it is because I was not here to hear his speech, but he should agree to this at once and the reason is patently obvious. We have had reviews of government legislation in this House before. I can recall three or four specifically that came up at House leaders' meetings. Committees were established to review government legislation that had been passed by this Parliament and it was then gone over with some care by a special committee.

The minister knows as well as I do that if a committee is not established to do that no committee is going to sit down as he tried to suggest and spend its time whiling through this bill just for the fun of it. Parliamentarians have lots of things to do and without a specific reference, the job simply will not get done in a reasonable period of time.

Five years is a reasonable time frame and the amendment is being moved by the NDP members to show they are active and not for any particular purpose. Having gone through the act in such detail at this stage it hardly seems appropriate that we go through it in two years. I think five is an adequate time and I am sure the minister would agree that five is an adequate time.

Mr. MacWilliam: He suggested two.

Mr. Milliken: If he suggests two why does he not move an amendment to make it two? If the minister is going to support the subamendment, great, but let us get on with it and get the bill improved. The fact is that unless we have a specific reference to a committee we are not going to review this bill. The hon. member for Okanagan—Shuswap knows that and that is why he is supporting this amendment.

I urge the minister to have another look at this. If the bill was so flawed when it was brought in and so many amendments were agreed to in a committee, surely an amendment as reasonable as the one moved by the hon. member for Mount Royal could be considered by the minister.

The minister has been the minister in his department now for two years and it has taken a long time to get this bill forward. I have no doubt it would have taken a lot longer if this minister had not been the minister. I know he is diligent and has not had to go off gallivanting around the country on a leadership campaign which no doubt has slowed down progress in several other government departments.

We are sorry in a way that the minister is not in the leadership campaign but from the point of view of getting legislation passed in this House we are delighted that he is able to be here because that is very helpful for the conduct of the legislative agenda.

I urge the minister to meet with his officials who I know are waiting with bated breath for him in the lobby to hear his views on this. Tell them he thinks the five-year review is a very sensible thing and that he and the government members should support this very sensible amendment and urge his officials to check the drafting, make sure it is all right and if it is satisfactory pass the amendment.

If there are technical changes in the wording of the amendment that would improve it, make it clearer or bring it into conformity with other similar clauses in other bills I am sure the hon. member for Mount Royal would be pleased to assist the minister and agree to anything that is necessary to make this change work.

The opposition is keen to have this work. We expect to be the government the next time. We are quite prepared to have a parliamentary review of this legislation and I suggest the minister put it into the bill so it is guaranteed at a certain time.

• (1525)

I hope the minister will consult. If he has to go back to his cabinet colleagues to get agreement for such an amendment I urge him to do so. I know he may have trouble getting hold of the Minister of the Environment and the Minister of National Defence. Who knows where they are today. Surely they come to Ottawa once in a while, at least to cabinet meetings where patronage is being discussed so they can get their friends appointed to all the right posts as we saw earlier today. If they can