

Private Members' Business

tuated and aggravated since the election of the present Liberal government, which is attempting to centralize decision making in Ottawa, with all due deference to my colleague from Glengarry—Prescott—Russell. The truth is not always easy to hear, but there you are.

It is becoming increasingly obvious that the present government, regardless of what it says, is seeking to centralize and concentrate power in Ottawa still further. Under a federal regime, there must of necessity be a division of areas of jurisdiction. In Canada, however, such a division often leads to inefficiency. At this very moment, there is a need for the federal government to enter into administrative agreements with the provinces. The current situation simply clouds the issue and makes it extremely difficult to identify who is really responsible if a policy does not bring results. Are we to blame the federal government, the author of the standards, or the provincial government, which may have been remiss in implementing those standards?

Since Canada maintains that it has jurisdiction over some areas of the environment because of the so-called national interest, this means it is in a position to enter into international agreements and to find global solutions along with its partners. Why then could the provinces not do the same with each other and with a sovereign Quebec?

The inefficiency of a system in which responsibility is not clearly identified lies in wasted energy due to duplication and is certainly not any guarantee of sustainable development. In fact, under the current federal system it would be unthinkable to guarantee any kind of sustainable development, since the government in Ottawa seems to have an abiding tendency to centralize powers and to interfere with matters that are the sole responsibility of the provinces.

Although Quebec recognizes the very real concern we should have for the environment, it is not prepared to let the federal government once again intrude in an area over which it has no jurisdiction. Responsibility for municipal sewage lies clearly with the provinces and the municipalities.

The Bloc Quebecois will vote against this motion, not because it is against protecting the environment, and I would like to say that we appreciate the good intentions of the hon. member for Comox—Alberni. As I said, the Bloc would vote against the motion, and it will do so not because it is against protecting the environment but rather because it believes that the environment is better protected when each government deals with the problems for which it is responsible, so that it can set priorities that make sense and as a result be truly effective.

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I too am pleased to participate this afternoon in this debate on Motion M-425.

Notwithstanding what we just heard—and I am not sure that the motion has this much importance in a sense—I must say that the remarks that were just made do not reflect what I would call the truth.

[English]

First, the motion before the House says that the government should support the undertaking—it says support, it does not say establish it themselves—support the undertaking of a country-wide program of improving the treatment of municipal sewage to a minimum standard of at least that of primary treatment facilities. The motion does not even talk about establishing one national standard, as was alleged by the hon. member from the Bloc Quebecois. Second, it is totally false to allege that it does anything else, which the member has also indicated.

• (1740)

[Translation]

Second, there is an amendment, and I wonder whether it is really in order. It must be in order if the Chair accepted it. I must tell you that this amendment has no connection with the main issue, since it deals with a right for all provinces to financial compensation. One has nothing to do with the other.

The motion simply calls upon the federal government to support certain initiatives to guarantee a minimum level of waste water treatment. That is all this motion is about.

Once again, today, the Bloc Quebecois was caught in this House making things up and stretching the truth to an incredible extent.

[English]

Sir Winston Churchill once said that the opposite to the truth had never been stated with greater accuracy. I guess one could apply that to the speech the House just heard with respect to what the intention of the motion really is.

I want to speak a bit about the infrastructure program. We get mixed messages from Reform MPs on infrastructure. The motion by the hon. member for Comox—Alberni invites the federal government to support infrastructure programs concerning sewers and the like. I have to admit that we have been getting mixed messages from Reform Party MPs on that subject. Come to think of it, we have been getting mixed messages from the Reform Party on just about every issue.

I have an editorial from the Ottawa *Citizen*, the valley edition, of August 14, 1994, which speaks of the Reform Party position on infrastructure. It is entitled "Reform Sings the Blues" and states that "The Reform Party seems to have changed its tune after advocating the nurturing of infrastructure before the election".