

Mr. Lambert (Bellechasse): Oh, oh! It is quite normal for government House leaders to communicate with one another; it is always done in a democratic Parliament and especially when it is honestly done, it is a fine custom which will enable us not to do as the previous government did—introduce a bill and leave it to die on the order paper. We now have the evidence. On November 9, 1978, the Canadian government, which was then led by the Liberals, introduced Bill C-17 to promote public safety and the protection of the environment in the transportation of dangerous goods. This bill was never passed by the House even though it was discussed in February, 1979. It cannot be said that hon. members did not agree at that time because when we reread *Hansard* we realize that they were ready to pass that bill. Therefore, I do not know why the government did not present it once again to have it passed before the dissolution of the last session of the Thirtieth Parliament.

In any event, Mr. Speaker, a number of mishaps have occurred since then. The catastrophe in Mississauga was of such a nature as to give us abundant food for thought. Made even more aware of the situation, the government has introduced Bill C-25 which we are looking into just now; although not perfect, this bill will make it mandatory for public transporters to operate more carefully and to warn the people who manoeuvre the cars about the dangerous goods they are transporting.

This bill, Mr. Speaker, will not remedy the unfortunate events which have occurred in the past. That is clear. But it will prevent similar events in the future. To administer is to foresee. On the basis of the provisions of this bill, it is to be hoped at least that the safety of the public will be better preserved and travellers better informed about the goods being transported. Moreover, the railway workers who manoeuvre the cars will probably be more careful, in order to protect not only the people but also the property of the community.

Mr. Speaker, passing a bill is not the end of it; it then has to be enacted, the act must be made known and applied. I have always regretted and I still regret the fact that once a bill becomes law it falls into the hands of the officials who are responsible for applying it. We then come to the stage of drafting the regulations which govern the application of the act.

I have often had to review specific cases pertaining to the implementation of an act and noted in the process that the regulations did not at all follow through on my intentions as a legislator. The rules and regulations did not follow the same train of thought as those I had hoped would apply in the application of the act. That is why I have always felt that the time has now come, when we reform our parliamentary procedure, to deal seriously with that problem, namely that once the regulations have been drafted, before they are sanctioned by order in council, they should go to a committee of the House where they could be reviewed to see whether they truly reflect

Transportation of Dangerous Goods

what the legislators, hon. members, had in mind, when they are applied.

Mr. Speaker, I feel it would be wise to do so; we would thus protect not only the users and those who apply the law but also the public generally, because the act would be publicized through the media, be it radio, television or the newspapers, to ensure that the public is made aware of both its obligations and its rights. Bill C-25 would, to my mind, give us a splendid opportunity for doing so. We would then know that this bill was passed, not only for the pleasure of doing so and showing that we want to give the people some measure of protection, but also to make sure it is really efficient.

I think if that were the case we would be acting as responsible people and the law would be applied as best as humanly possible. Of course there may be mishaps along the way. Nothing is perfect. I know that, but our responsibilities as parliamentarians, as law makers, is to strive as much as possible for perfection in drafting our laws and to ask our officials, who are responsible for the application of the legislation, to do their best so as to ensure the greatest protection possible and to achieve the aims of this bill.

I wanted to take this opportunity to say that my colleagues and I support this piece of legislation and, as I have said, we want it to be well applied when it does indeed come into force.

● (2100)

[English]

Mr. Chas. L. Caccia (Davenport): Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for introducing this bill, and I welcome the opportunity to express our position, and to comment on it very briefly.

Our concern on this side of the House has to do with the fact that any direct reference to the environment in the title and in the text of the bill has been omitted. If the minister will take a moment to compare the old Bill C-17 in its previous incarnation, he will notice that it was entitled "An act to promote public safety and the protection of the environment in the transportation of dangerous goods". The bill before us today, Bill C-25, the Progressive Conservative version, is entitled "An act to promote public safety in the transportation of dangerous goods". The word "environment" has been dropped from the title, and it has been dropped from the text of the bill.

It is true that the descriptive part of the bill gives adequate emphasis to the environment in so-called class 9 of the schedule, but the operative part of the bill does not. For example, when it comes to the powers of the inspector to seize, remove, or forfeit dangerous goods, the duties to report and to take reasonable emergency measures, and the power to conduct inquiries, no mention is made of the environment. Why is that?

Clause 14(1) of the present proposed bill gives the inspector powers of seizure, removal and forfeiture of dangerous goods in order to prevent or reduce any serious and imminent danger to life, health and property. Why is there no reference to the environment as there was in Bill C-17, clause 11?