

Mr. Aiken: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, I wonder if it would be the wish of the House to let the minister close the debate before the question is put. We would then have completed the debate and the question could be put, depending on the ruling of the Chair.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: As I indicated earlier, the Chair is not ready to make a ruling on the point of order raised by the hon. member for St. John's East. If hon. members wish, the minister might be allowed to close the debate. But the motion obviously cannot be put until a ruling is made by the Chair.

Mr. McGrath: Mr. Speaker, I find it difficult to give unanimous consent to the minister because of what Your Honour has just said with respect to the ruling which has yet to be made. However, if I did give consent it would be with the understanding that what the minister had to say would not in any way jeopardize the ruling subsequently to be made.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Just to make it clear, the minister, as I understand it, would be speaking on the substantive motion and not on the point of order. I reiterate that the motion will not be put until the Chair has made a ruling. On those conditions, if it is agreeable to hon. members the minister might be permitted to close the debate. Is it so agreed?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Davis: Mr. Speaker, I shall be very brief. First I must say that I appreciate the remarks made by hon. members from all corners of the House. I will be looking forward to the positive and helpful suggestions which they will be making to improve this legislation in the Fisheries and Forestry Committee, legislation which I think they all agree is important and which should be passed by Parliament in the best possible form.

● (4:00 p.m.)

I only want to comment on one aspect of this legislation which was referred to by nearly all hon. members speaking on the bill, and that is the constitutional or federal aspect of it. The government already has been engaged with the provinces in a discussion on constitutional powers, and particularly on powers in dealing with pollution and the quality of the environment of this country. The proposal made by the government to the provinces has been that of concurrent power, which should clear up a number of difficulties, particularly trans-border difficulties between provinces.

I think another important aspect of the bill is the requirement on federal agencies to clean up. I have certainly expressed the opinion to the provinces that federal institutions must conform to local bylaws and provincial regulations in every way. The provinces themselves, particularly last fall when the Premiers met with the Prime Minister and again recently, appeared to indicate that they thought the federal government should take leadership in this area.

Clean Air Act

I think that the doubts which have been expressed in various corners of the House about constitutional powers in respect of pollution will not be borne out. Indeed, I think that the provinces will co-operate in every way in the execution not only of the clean air act but of every type of legislation dealing with pollution in this country. I thank hon. members, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Richard): In accordance with the agreement reached previously, the debate on Bill C-224 having been concluded, the question will not be put until this item appears again on Orders of the Day.

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Richard): It being four o'clock, the house will now proceed to the consideration of private members business as listed on today's Order Paper, namely, public bills.

Mr. Stewart (Cochrane): I rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker, and ask the indulgence of the House. I do not intend to take up too much time with my point of order because there is little enough time for members to speak in private members' hour. What I must say could perhaps be decided upon in a couple of minutes. Item No. 36 on the Order Paper under private members' public bills is Bill C-69 which stands in my name. It is a bill respecting the presence of the national flag of Canada in both Houses of Parliament. Since I think there is a consensus on all sides of the House on this question, I wonder whether Your Honour would ask if there is unanimous consent for this item to be brought to the top of the list and to be given second and third reading.

Some hon. Members: No.

Mr. Stewart (Cochrane): Perhaps the bill could be disposed of completely, after which we could get on with other business.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Richard): Hon. members have heard the suggestion of the hon. member for Cochrane (Mr. Stewart). Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. Members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Richard): There is not unanimous consent.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BILLS

CANADA LABOUR (SAFETY) CODE

MEASURE TO INCLUDE SHIP REPAIR WORKERS,
LONGSHOREMEN AND PORT WORKERS

Mr. John L. Skoberg (Moose Jaw) moved that Bill C-27, to amend the Canada Labour (Safety) Code (marine workers), be read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Labour, Manpower and Immigration.