

Supply

I do not want it to come to this at this hour. Once I was asked for consent on another matter around this same hour and I thought I should have said what I am saying here today. But I want him to know—

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): I am sorry but, the Hon. Member for Saint-Denis cannot continue. This is not a debate. I made allowances with case of the Hon. Member for Saint-Denis because he is the dean of the House. But a request for unanimous consent seemed to have been denied. The Parliamentary Secretary has withdrawn his motion. Therefore, we are returning to the order of the day, namely, the question and comment period.

Hon. Jean Lapierre (Shefford): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): The Hon. Member for Shefford on a point of order.

Mr. Lapierre: You may interrupt the debate, Mr. Speaker, but I am already on a point of order. It is quite simple. The Parliamentary Secretary has tried to develop a situation where, under a sort of conspiracy of silence, at about 5.45 p.m., he tries surreptitiously to sneak in a few "quickies". Like the Hon. Member for Saint-Denis, we are somewhat disgusted to see this kind of deals by people who claim to be speaking on behalf of others. Mr. Speaker, we hereby give you notice that we are sick and tired of him also.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): I am prepared to entertain other points of order, but I call the attention of the House to the fact that there is nothing to debate, the motion having been withdrawn for lack of unanimous consent. I will hear the Hon. Member for Winnipeg—Transcona who rose on a point of order, but I do hope it is not the same.

[*English*]

Mr. Blaikie: Mr. Speaker, my point of order was simply that I thought the matter had been dealt with and we should return to the question and answer period, which would rightly have followed the speech by the hon. member for LaSalle—Émard.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Great! Therefore, the Hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment has the floor.

[*English*]

Mr. Lee Clark (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, I know the hon. member who has just spoken has a great desire to be precise and I appreciate the manner in which he has chosen his words. I would like to direct his attention to the question of a document which he cited which had been referred to earlier in the debate, and referred to as an alleged agreement.

There are times in my life when I am happy that I am not a lawyer. There are times in my life when I wish I had had an opportunity to study law. I would assume, as a layperson, that any reference to an alleged agreement would presumably be an agreement reached between two or more parties. I would want to ask very precisely whether this document, to which the hon. member and, I gather, other hon. members have referred, does in fact indicated that one or more parties had signed that agreement? Is this alleged agreement a signed agreement, or is it an unsigned alleged agreement? I think there is an important difference between the two.

Mr. Martin: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to respond to the hon. parliamentary secretary. The agreement that I saw was not signed. The issue is not whether or not it was signed. The issue is that the minister had an opportunity to deny the existence of the agreement. The second point is that the agreement does seem to enshrine a quite archaic view of environmental assessment, which view is also enshrined in Bill C-78. My point is that there is a coincidence of archaic assessment views. I would hope that the agreement is, in fact, not a real agreement. I would certainly appreciate the opportunity of hearing the minister deny its existence, but the agreement was not signed.

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg Transcona): Mr. Speaker, I would like the hon. member for LaSalle—Émard to just elaborate for a few moments on this archaic principle that he refers to because of interest to me is the notion that environmental damage can somehow be compensated for in a financial way.

It seems to me that this is very much not Canadian *perestroika* or new thinking when it comes to the environment but is very much an old way of thinking that assumes that these kinds of things can be made up for in dollars. It is a bit like what we were doing 15 years ago and we still are, in some respects, asking aboriginal peoples to extinguish their land claims for money. We