

*Oral Questions***BILL C-78**

Mr. Len Taylor (The Battlefords—Meadow Lake): Mr. Speaker, last year the Minister of the Environment had a difficult time with the government's environmental assessment legislation and guidelines. He introduced Bill C-78 in an attempt to alleviate some of those problems.

In doing so, the Minister of the Environment said Canada needed new environmental assessment legislation badly. He said: "It is a tool that this country cannot do without."

My question is to the Minister of the Environment, who has admitted that he is prepared to amend Bill C-78, but he has ignored the legislative committee of this House for the past three months. What has happened to his commitment toward environmental assessment? Does he really believe that this country needs assessment legislation, or is he losing the battle to the big business colleagues in cabinet?

Hon. Robert de Cotret (Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, the member opposite is quite right. When I introduced the legislation last June, I made it clear that I was very interested in seeing what recommendations would come from Canadians being heard during the committee proceedings.

We heard quite a bit from Canadians and from the opposition parties during those hearings.

We are still very much committed to the legislation and we will be proposing to the legislative committee a number of amendments to try to improve the legislation and make sure that this legislation is just the best in the world.

Mr. Len Taylor (The Battlefords—Meadow Lake): Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the Minister of the Environment.

It was December 11, in answer to a question I put in this House, that the minister said he would accept amendments to C-78. Today, I have presented 111 amendments to Bill C-78 and presented them to the Minister of the Environment this morning.

I ask the Minister of the Environment, as a supplementary question, is he prepared to accept those amend-

ments, which include such logical and reasonable things as an environmental auditor and intervenor funding?

Hon. Robert de Cotret (Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, it might have been helpful to advance this file if the hon. member opposite had given me a copy of the 111 amendments that he is proposing to Bill C-78.

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CONFIDENCE MOTIONS

Miss Deborah Grey (Beaver River): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister.

Given the negative impacts of very strict party discipline on representative democracy and public confidence in our parliamentary institutions, for instance the events which took place last week over an opposition motion on medicare, would the government be prepared to introduce the following motion: "That in the opinion of this House, a defeat of a government motion should not be considered as sufficient reason for the resignation of the government unless followed by a vote of lack of confidence", or does the Prime Minister perceive such parliamentary reform to be contrary to the British parliamentary procedure?

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Absolutely not, Mr. Speaker. Indeed, prior to that member's election, upon the election of this government, the McGrath commission was introduced by this Prime Minister which increased the opportunities for members to participate. The rule changes debate, which will be commencing this afternoon, in fact further enhance that.

I look forward to discussions involving how we might meet the objectives. I would wonder how one could reconcile signing a document saying: "All candidates of the Reform Party must strictly adhere to the policies of the Reform Party with free votes." If the question is in support of the policies of the Reform Party then clearly you could not, by oath, vote the way the member herself chose to do.

• (1500)

Miss Deborah Grey (Beaver River): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is also for the Prime Minister.