

*Canadian Environmental Protection Act*

Once I have the results of the investigation in hand, I shall take appropriate action at the earliest possible time.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski):** The Hon. Member for Spadina, in response.

**Mr. Heap:** Mr. Speaker, I wish to respond, briefly, to the point raised by the Hon. Member for Regina West (Mr. Benjamin) in respect of the consultation process.

What I find most discouraging is the fact that, under the legislation, the Minister will not recommend a regulation unless he is satisfied that not all of the Governments of the provinces are prepared to implement, by or under provincial law, provisions substantially the same as those contained in the regulation.

In other words, if the Minister finds that nine of the provinces are doing it but one is not, he may go ahead, or perhaps even "shall" go ahead. But how long is he going to take in consultation with the provincial Ministers? If he gets a less than satisfactory answer from the current Minister, will he await a change in cabinet responsibilities in that province and consult the new Minister? How long will the consultation process take?

That aspect of it is very unsatisfactory. While the federal Minister operates under a time limitation, the provincial Ministers do not. As a consequence, that particular clause of the legislation amounts to an invitation to do nothing at all, so long as the federal Minister finds that at least one province is still hanging in the air on a given question.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski):** The time for questions and comments is now terminated. On debate, the Hon. Member for Chambly (Mr. Grisé), the Parliamentary Secretary.

[Translation]

**Mr. Richard Grisé (Parliamentary Secretary to Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council):** Mr. Speaker, I welcome this opportunity to speak to a Bill that is so important to the Canadian people, and whose purpose is to protect the environment, life and health of all Canadians. The Canadian Environmental Protection Act is a very important piece of legislation. In fact, for the first time in more than ten years, the Government has tabled major legislation that constitutes a commitment to protecting the environment for present and for future generations. The Bill deals, of course, with air pollution and the contamination of waterways, land and the oceans. It provides the authority to regulate toxic substances, whether organic or inorganic, animate or inanimate.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill also tells everyone that polluting the environment is a crime punishable by law. And we have our work cut out for us, because once this legislation is adopted by Parliament, its provisions still have to be enforced.

We realize this, and last week, the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney), when he met the President of the United States in

Washington, was very serious in his discussions about protecting the environment, about acid rain and about other areas of concern as well. We realize this, Mr. Speaker. We have earmarked \$37 million for this purpose and set up investigation services in all regions.

Mr. Speaker, there has been a great deal of discussion about Bill C-74. On second reading, twenty-four Members spoke to this Bill. The Legislative Committee met twenty-seven times. One hundred and forty-six amendments were approved. At the report stage, forty-one Members spoke to the Bill, and we are now at the third reading stage and we have already had nearly seven hours of debate. And it seems that we will need more, and that we will have to continue the debate on this important Bill.

● (1720)

[English]

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I move:

That the House continue to sit beyond the ordinary hour of daily adjournment for the purpose of continuing consideration of third reading of Bill C-74, an Act respecting the protection of the environment and of human life and health.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski):** The House has heard the terms of the motion moved by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister (Mr. Grisé). Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Some Hon. Members:** No.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski):** According to the provisions of Standing Order 9(4)(b), if 15 or more Members rise in their places to object the motion is defeated.

Shall the motion carry?

*And more than 15 Members having risen:*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski):** Since more than 15 Members have risen, the motion is deemed to be withdrawn.

Are there any questions or comments?

**Mr. Riis:** Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Hon. Member. First, I want to indicate that out of 208 Progressive Conservatives there are fewer than 20 in the House of Commons at the moment.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski):** The Hon. Member has been a long-time Member of this House and knows why I am rising. He should not bring to the attention of anyone or even the television audience the presence or absence of Members in the House. There are televisions in the lobbies where Members may be watching the debate. I hope the Hon. Member will please not comment on who is or is not in the House.

**Mr. Riis:** Mr. Speaker, it is unfortunate that the Government does not want to debate the issue of the environment. This is one of the very few opportunities we have had in the last four years for Members from all sides to speak on this issue. I do not think I have heard a single government Member speak on this important legislation in the last few days.