

*Supply**[English]*

**Mr. Kristiansen:** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have had the opportunity to have heard the remarks made by the Hon. Member for Lotbinière (Mr. Tremblay). I believe that he has been a Member of this House since 1984. Thus he was here during the passage of the Parliamentary Relations and Staff Relations Act in June of 1986, almost exactly three years ago. This is relevant to the matter before us today, particularly in respect to the first part of the motion proposed by my colleague from the New Democratic Party who has placed the motion before us today which relates to the appointment of an environmental officer of the House of Commons whose duties shall include the responsibility of reporting to the Speaker on ways in which the House of Commons can contribute to a safe and environmentally healthy future.

I am pleased that the Minister of Labour (Mr. Corbeil) is here since that particular Act, if it were all proclaimed, would fulfil part of the purpose of the motion before us, particularly with regard to asbestos within the House of Commons.

The National Association of Broadcast Employees and Technicians represents some 60 or so employees on the Hill who provide television coverage and the in-house Oasis network information systems that are used by all Members of the House. These employees work literally behind the walls of the House of Commons installing wires in the communications system. As a result of that they get face to face with the asbestos insulation that Governments generally only recognized as a problem just a few years ago. That is to say, the life threatening nature of this substance which the life insurance industry recognized as far back as 1918. It took a long time for governments to catch up.

One of the problems is that when the House of Commons passed Bill C-45 on June 25, 1986, it proclaimed Part 1 of the Act only. The Hon. Member for Lotbinière has said, as previous Members on his side of the House have said, that it takes time to do these things. However, we passed the legislation. Part I has been proclaimed. Part II and Part III which, in particular, deals

with occupational safety and health have still to be proclaimed. The legislation is in place. We have been waiting now for three years to protect the lives of people who work here on the Hill.

Just a little while ago workers were working up above the ceilings across from Room 147 in the West Block, which used to be my office before 1984 and which is now the office of our agriculture critic. It is right next to the messengers who service the West Block. Some of the asbestos insulation simply started falling out of the ceiling. These were contractors who had not been advised of the substances they were going to have to be dealing with. Finally, work was stopped in that instance, but in many cases contractors have been brought into the House to do work and are simply not aware of the hazards that exist. Oftentimes when they come with complaints to the responsible officers of the House they are met with the answer: "What is the problem? There is not a problem". Does the Hon. Member know—or perhaps the Minister of Labour at some point on questions or comments can tell us—when we are going to have Part III of the Act proclaimed in order that we can protect the lives and health of people who work for us here on Parliament Hill?

*[Translation]*

**Mr. Tremblay (Lotbinière):** Mr. Speaker, my Hon. friend refers to that part of the motion I could not of course oppose. The best proof of that, as he says, is that we passed that act.

Clearly, Mr. Speaker, I am not an inspector myself and cannot determine whether indeed in our own premises there are or are not dangerous goods that could infringe upon the act. But if that were the case, Mr. Speaker, every party of course, every individual would be in a position to use those provisions. Now, he is referring to cases where the inspectors, if they were made aware, did not follow up. The inspectors involved and their comments as experts have not been determined.

So, Mr. Speaker, all those regulations or provisions already are in place. If ever complaints come up they should be filed with the authorities concerned.