

*Private Members' Business*

is, but I am not exactly sure what it is doing. I would like to, as I say, read that report before I decide.

• (1740)

The member suggested in his statement that it might be that very low voltages or very low amounts of power might do or could do more damage than the very high voltage lines. The whole statement was riddled with this idea that something could happen or could not happen. It might be worse, it might not. Obviously all the member was really saying to us is that they do not know, and we appreciate that. There is not enough known about the subject and that is why the motion was moved, urging that something be done to make sure that more is known about it.

There is concern about this on Vancouver Island. A lady has gained some international fame trying to raise this issue and trying to make more governments aware of just how serious a matter it can be. Can be, I say. It may not be. There may be other reasons for the instances we have heard about, read about, and been told about, where there is an apparent effect on people who live near high voltage lines. That may not be the reason at all. It may be that it is the low voltage lines that are worse than the high, we just do not know.

In these days when people are much more concerned about and much more aware of what we are doing to the environment and the effects of human activity upon the environment in which we are living, it is important to know as much as we can. There is some apparent evidence. We have to examine that very closely. More studies can be done and I believe, from the statement that was just read, that studies are being done not only in Canada but in other countries as well.

I support this motion and urge the government to take this very seriously. We want to know, as soon as we can, just exactly how important this is. We want to know the risks. We want to know what can be done to protect our people, our animals and our plant life from the effects of living near low voltage or high voltage lines. Let's get with it, let's do everything we can to study this issue and let's gather some information that at least can be reassuring or can point out the ways in which we can protect ourselves because doing away with the high voltage lines just is not practical right now. Perhaps there are some ways of protecting ourselves and life in general

from what may be the effects of living near high voltage or low voltage lines.

However, let us get the information and let us not say that we have all the time in the world to do this because we are building more and more high voltage lines and it is more and more important that we deal with this as an urgent matter and one that is capable of being studied if we determine internationally that it is something upon which we should work. We should certainly exchange information, co-operate with other nations in the world and try to get as much information and as much real knowledge as we can and then deal with it and make it public.

The statement tells us that all this work has been going on. I have heard, read, and been told about people who have experienced situations which they attribute to the high voltage lines, but until this moment I did not know that the government was studying it at all. Perhaps that is my fault, perhaps I should have known. If the government is doing anything, it is being very quiet, very reticent about sharing its activity, let alone its information with the public generally. Mr. Speaker, we support this motion.

**Hon. Ralph Ferguson (Lambton—Middlesex):** Mr. Speaker, I commend my colleague for bringing before the House today this motion that the government should consider the advisability of studying the effects of electro-magnetic fields created by high voltage power lines on both human and animal health and report the findings to this House.

Electro-magnetic radiation is suspected to be damaging to the body's ability to fight diseases and to the central nervous system. Residents living near the lines have long complained about headaches, memory loss, more illness than usual, and a constant irritating hum.

I have to take issue with the parliamentary secretary who pointed out that perhaps there are enough electro-magnetic fields in homes with microwave ovens, various other appliances and the wiring of homes to have caused this. I would have to refute that because, if that is the case, why has it impacted on the health of animals that are grazing in close proximity to these lines or living in barns which are in close proximity? Why has the milk production of dairy herds dropped dramatically? When you move these herds away from these lines milk production eventually picks up again. There are also animals which fail to conceive until they are moved away