

Government Orders

permit Treasury Board to consult the public to identify possible land in an area that might be put to other uses, it would then permit perhaps even some form of public review which would require officials such as in this case, the Department of National Defence, almost publicly to defend or justify the use of their plans for the land. Then we may begin to move into much more efficient and effective use of government land.

Government land is an important heritage. It cannot be squandered quickly at some bright idea on a given day. With that caveat there are lands which can be used much more effectively than they have been. It would be very important that the government be prepared to do that.

There is one other caveat. There will be situations, and again I can think of one in my own constituency, where the federal government cannot use the land but other local public authorities can, for fundamentally the same purpose that the federal government may wish to use it. That may be an example where Treasury Board should not be insisting on full market value for land but should be prepared to acknowledge alternate public uses as something that the federal government is prepared to contribute to and would like to see some assistance in.

• (1030)

Therefore, with those extra comments I would repeat that our party is prepared and happy to support this bill. We congratulate the minister and all members of the committee for the work they have done on this. This bill is better for it. It is a good example of how this Parliament can work when it puts its mind to it.

Mr. Loiselle: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for his very positive comments. I believe that this bill has, indeed, been improved by the work of both the Liberal opposition and the NDP and it has shown, as the hon. member has indicated, what this Parliament can do.

This is a very, very difficult, complex bill and with the permission of my colleagues I would like to thank the people of Treasury Board who have been working on this. This is a very difficult issue. They have been working at this for years and they have come up with

what I think is probably the best bill possible to manage real property in the public environment. I think they deserve to be complimented for this work.

As for the commitments which were made in committee, I am glad to confirm that these commitments are there and we will abide by them. As far as making better use of property, particularly in urban areas, we are working on that very actively. Indeed this is a responsibility. We have to make sure that the land which is owned by Canadians is put to the best possible use. I am glad to report that we are already working on major projects in the British Columbia area as well as in the Toronto area.

These local authorities are frequently faced with very heavy pressures and it is our duty to co-operate with them whenever we can. Through good management of our real property, we can do that.

I would like to thank all the members for their co-operation, the civil servants who have worked on this difficult bill and for the support they have given us.

Mr. Brewin: Madam Speaker, I guess what I am doing is replying to the comment, if I have the procedure point at hand. I suppose I should permit the minister to have the last word but that comes very difficult to me and I will not do it.

First of all, I would just like to see if I can have the minister speak to one point. I wonder if we can have unanimous consent when I have finished for the minister to reply to a point which I should have put in the form of a question. I can now be quite specific about it.

The member missed an earlier dialogue, so we are playing a little loose here because we think we are going to finish this very quickly.

The question I had on my mind was this. Not only is there the kind of situation I referred to in general, of the federal government when it did not need its land, being prepared to transfer it to local authorities for less than market value. My suggestion is that it should be seen as a different case than the transfer to private uses and in that context that Treasury Board should be prepared to consider, in effect, a public contribution or take into account the public use in assessing the value.