

Government Orders

I recall sitting in committee when various members of the opposition, who came from centres that were spewing out all kinds of pollution and polluting the environment in an unlimited manner, passed judgment on a project that was going ahead and was as environmentally sound as could possibly be.

All three governments that were in, including the NDP, the prior Liberal governments, and the Conservative government recommended study after study that the project go ahead. Just because the Conservatives built it, they were opposed to it.

• (1750)

I want to say this. Watch the NDP in Saskatchewan complete it. They are not going to blow it up. It is not going to be done away with.

It is important that this kind of legislation come through the House so that we move ahead in a positive direction on the environment. Bill C-15 brings forward sound regulations and legislation.

I just wanted to make that comment after hearing so many remarks about a project that many people know nothing about and will probably never see.

Mr. Fulton: Mr. Speaker, I am glad to have received the question from the hon. member. The bill is actually Bill C-13 that we are debating here today.

In terms of his comments on Rafferty-Alameda, the concern that I think is held very widely among residents of Saskatchewan, whether they are for or opposed to the project, is that this government continually and flagrantly violated the laws passed by this Parliament. The courts made that abundantly clear. It was the Federal Court of Appeal, not just the Federal Court, that ordered the minister to comply with statutes passed by this Parliament.

The other point I want to make is that by the time the Rafferty-Alameda project was being actively considered for development, it was abundantly clear what direction the government agencies should be taking in terms of the 1984 cabinet guidelines order. It was not known that it was a mandatory law of general application. A lot of the administrative law that we talk about here in March 1992 on the floor of the House has come since the beginning of Rafferty-Alameda.

The concern that I think residents of Saskatchewan hold, though, is that the Government of Canada refused to hold back on the project and to use the trigger powers that it had under the International Rivers Improvement Act to allow the studies to be completed, to allow the panels to complete the process that they were required to undertake by law.

So there was the violation of the statutes of Canada; there was the violation of the government's own code of conduct, the 1984 cabinet guidelines order, which were not suddenly hatched, Mr. Speaker, in 1984; these regulations came originally from a cabinet directive in 1974. They were rewritten and became an Order in Council in 1984.

On the technical questions about the Rafferty-Alameda dam, we will find out over time that it is not an effective impoundment system that has been proposed. If one looks at the rate of rainfall in that area of Saskatchewan over a long period of time, particularly when one looks at it over multiple decades, one looks at the amount of flow that could be required in relation to the Souris, if one looks at the implications of adding coal-fired thermal heated water back into those systems, what the implications may well be, one ends up with a kind of impoundment system that will not be pleasant for boating, it will not be pleasant for fishing, it will not be particularly good for irrigation, it will not be particularly good for flood protection.

If the hon. member took more time to speak to people like the Tetslaff brothers and got a grip on the number of federal jurisdictions that have been abused and maligned and contravened by government action, including the continual slap in the face to the Federal Court of Appeal that has been taken by the Government of Canada, one would realize why a very dim view of the political behaviour of Progressive Conservatives at the federal level is held by many people, not just in Saskatchewan, on environmental issues, but in many provinces, in Quebec, in Nova Scotia, in Newfoundland, in British Columbia. Because if one continues to flagrantly crap in the nest, to say "Oh, we are passing these laws; look at us, we are great. We've got a green plan" and then, behind closed doors, to cut deals with corporations and provincial authorities, and so on.