

*Supply*

The Minister has just called the problem of acid rain a national tragedy. If he really believes that it is a national tragedy, how could he in good conscience participate in an awards ceremony held by an organization that does not see acid rain as being a problem that should be combated in an international arena?

I would like to read some of the comments made by the head of the group that is honouring our Prime Minister: "Despite the odd cry of an acid rain crisis, acid rain is generally considered to be a long-term phenomenon. There is no current basis to support the contention that acid rain is a problem out of control, that acid rain is a widespread national problem or that acid rain is a recent problem".

The Minister has just called acid rain a national tragedy. Yet he and the Prime Minister are trotting off to Washington to get an award from a so-called environmental group whose primary function over the last number of years has been to lobby Governments to prohibit legislation governing the control of pollution. Is there not a bit of hypocrisy in the Government's decision to accept this award? Would it not restore the credibility of the Minister if he told his good friend the Prime Minister that this is one award that he should pass up?

I realize that the Government has a penchant for taking awards, some of which are undeserved, as we saw with the Oscar. This is one case in which the Minister could actually get public credibility by refusing an award. I am not surprised, however, that the Minister says one thing here and will probably say something completely different in Washington when he meets with this international business lobby today. He made a lot of strong comments in the House regarding the Rafferty-Alameda dam. I think it is a darn shame that the Minister of the Environment is unwilling and unable, to respect his own laws, that he has to be forced into the position of respecting his own laws by a Federal Court judgment. We all know the history of the Rafferty-Alameda dam, the history of subterfuge, of the federal Government refusing to acknowledge the fact that 13 per cent of the lands that were involved in the flooding of the Alameda project were under federal jurisdiction. The federal guidelines should have applied. When the Minister came into office, he was given the opportunity to reverse the negative decision of his predecessor and demand a full federal environmental assessment. Instead he refused. It

was up to the courts to actually order him to carry out an environmental assessment which was supposed to have been done by his own Department.

• (1230)

Following that judgment, the Minister wisely stood in the House in support of the decision of the Federal Court and said that there was going to be full environmental assessment. Let us hear what he said a few days later when he was being interviewed on CBC's Saturday morning program. The CBC is asking:

You use the words environmentally practical. In terms of the principle, the environment is not going to be protected were it practically and economically insupportable. Is that what you are saying?

BOUCHARD: No, no, that is not what I am saying. I am saying that we must comply fully with environmental purposes with this case as with any other one. And furthermore, there is a practical aspect to it. If we are conducting the studies, this means we will be closer to be able to resume the work.

If the Minister of the Environment is truly serious about an independent environmental assessment as was ordered by the Federal Court, why would he be prejudging the results of such an independent assessment by suggesting that the sooner we get on with the study, the sooner we can resume the work? Perhaps, Mr. Speaker, in an independent process, the environmental review would show that it is not sustainable to construct the project, and the project would be quashed. But obviously by this signal sent out by the Minister very directly to his bureaucrats, to people in his own Department who will be carrying out this assessment, he is telling them directly and indirectly, let us get the studies over with so we can get on with the project. I thought it was the job of the Minister of the Environment to come in *tabula rasa*, to come in with an open mind as to whether or not the project should continue.

As far as I am concerned, the statement that the Minister made on the CBC—and it is a direct transcript from Saturday, April 15—is an absolute anathema to the independent environmental process. Indeed it makes a mockery of his very strong statements made earlier the House of Commons. Either the Minister is there to protect the environment and to provide independent review, or he is there simply to promote construction if and when we have got these little trivialities of environmental assessment behind us.