

Rafferty-Alameda dam. The past MLA for the NDP supports it. The past MLA for the Liberals that represented the Estevan area support it. People from all parties support it. What is the problem here?

We need the water to cool Shand power station. We need the dam for flood protection in run-off years because the situation, when there is a heavy run-off, is that the water comes all at one time and then the river dries up completely.

There has been a lot of talk about the fish. We are certainly concerned about fish. My farm is six miles from the dam. There are very few years when one cannot walk across that river absolutely bone dry, and any fish that would happen to be in that river would die. One of the very difficult things that we have seen here in debate in committee, in this House, and across the country is that we have people talking about a subject and a situation about which they have absolutely no understanding.

I would like to emphasize for all Canadians, for the House of Commons, and for all those who will have a part in bringing about sound sustainable development to our country: don't take advantage of an area by commenting on situations of which you have no understanding just to make political points. It simply does not count. What really counts is the facts. If we are going to have good sustainable development for the future, let us put some guidelines in place such as the ones in Bill C-78 that will do just that.

What happened with the EARP guidelines? I want to make the following point: no one has said that Rafferty-Alameda is not environmentally sound. What we are arguing about here is the guidelines. The people in my area feel betrayed. We feel we have become guinea pigs for the rest of the country on the guidelines. Let us get down to earth and EARP the earth, if you will, and get on with the new guidelines as the minister is trying to do. Let us put into place a set of guidelines that is going to work for all Canadians and not penalize a few in one area, which happens at this time to be the Rafferty-Alameda project.

What is the history of the EARP guidelines? I understand that they were brought together in a hurry at the end of the administration of the Trudeau years, in the last two weeks. There are those who have admitted to writing them in a hurry to get something on the table for

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the then Prime Minister. These guidelines were ill conceived. They have not worked. Add to that the fact that we have grown 100 years in terms of environmentally sound thinking. The project that was in place is caught in the middle of it.

There was a time the provincial government put in place the guidelines and we moved by those guidelines and that was it; the federal government accepted it. Maybe that time is well passed and we need a new set of guidelines, but let's not penalize the Rafferty-Alameda dam just because there were a poor set of guidelines.

Again I want to emphasize that people have been talking about a project of which they know nothing. I hear the Manitoba people, people from the town of Melita who have come down to meetings in Estevan, supporting it in areas where they have had flooding. The people of Minot, where they have had their homes flooded out, have come down supporting it and saying that it is environmentally sound and that it is good for the area. What is the problem? Let's get on with it.

You might say the people of your area are against environmentally sound practices. There are very few meetings that I have not attended. Time after time I would hear our farmers say again and again: "Look it, we are environmentally conscious". They are probably more conscious than many other areas of the country.

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One farmer from Oxbow said: "I knew exactly how many deer were in the valley. I know how many birds' nests there are. I see them". These, I should say, can be mitigated and will be mitigated with other areas around the dam that will allow nesting and so on. Nobody has argued with that. Again it is back to the guidelines.

Our people are environmentally conscious, and this is a project that is environmentally sound. I dare challenge the rest of the country. There might not be too many projects that are as environmentally sound as Rafferty-Alameda.

I do not want to throw stones at anybody in Ontario, eastern Canada or anywhere else, but there are some major environmental problems in Canada that are much more serious than anything that will ever happen at Rafferty-Alameda. This is in my opinion. In the opinion of those who have studied it and in the opinion of the judges we are not dealing with the environmental aspect;