

Private Members' Business

water quality and quantity as the river enters Manitoba, with negative impact on certain plants and birds in this province. The report noted that there was a lack of information about these issues and called for an assessment of the impact on water quality and monitoring plans for birds and wildlife.

The Manitoba provincial government wanted a full environmental impact review, but the moderator of the hearings on the preliminary reports said that previous studies were enough and a full federal environmental assessment was not necessary. The federal environment minister agreed, and a new licence was issued, accompanied by 22 conditions, such that Saskatchewan must replace habitat and monitor water quality.

The federal government's failure to have a full assessment before issuing the licence shows that this government is ready and willing to abandon its commitment to the environment whenever it is politically or economically expedient for it to do so. This is scandalous. This is why we need legislation making environmental assessments compulsory. The confusion over the Rafferty-Alameda dam project was a case of a bad process leading to bad policy in programs.

Clearly, there is a need for more consistent and straightforward federal government legislation in this area. The Minister of the Environment has noted that he shares the view that there is a need for a statutory requirement to conduct an environmental assessment of all proposals falling within the area of federal responsibility.

Land, water and air are matters not confined within provincial or even federal boundaries. They are international. We have an obligation to preserve our lands, our wilderness, our water and the air we breathe. Canadians must develop a new mindset, a new attitude. It is no longer a question of who is right, the demands of short-term profits and political gains, or the future of our planet. It is now time to act.

I hope the government will put its words into deeds and support this motion. Allow me, Mr. Speaker, on behalf of constituents of Winnipeg North, and on behalf of all Canadians, to conclude with a quotation from the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development:

Most of today's decision makers will be dead before the planet suffers the full consequences of acid rain, global warming, ozone depletion, widespread desertification and species loss. Most of today's young voters will be alive.

Mr. Stan Darling (Parry Sound—Muskoka): Mr. Speaker, as a Canadian with a strong interest in environmental matters, it gives me a great deal of pleasure to rise today to express my views on Motion No. 485 as amended, which was presented to this House by my esteemed colleague from Fraser Valley West.

This motion calls for legislation to fully protect the Canadian environment through the institution of mandatory environmental impact assessment procedures. Before commenting further on the substance of this motion, I think it is appropriate that I commend my colleague for Fraser Valley West for his long-time commitment to the matter at hand.

His interest began, I believe, back in 1979 when he presented a private members' bill in this House. He is to be congratulated for his patience and diligence on this issue. In a time of instant environmentalists, it is always a pleasure to see an individual who has demonstrated an interest in the environment long before it became the fashionable thing to do.

Returning to the matter before us, the purpose of Motion No. 485, as amended, is to establish a statutory process to assess the environmental impact of development before the development occurs rather than after the damage begins.

For many years, economic and engineering studies have accompanied any major new proposal, and with the increasing importance of environmental issues, an environmental review is now becoming part of the process. Unfortunately, the existing process of the federal environmental assessment and review process, or EARP, as it is known in its short form, is flawed. Current EARP guidelines are uncertain because they are basically an administrative policy and as such can be changed by future governments through an order in council.

As well, the *ad hoc* nature of the current regime makes its legal status somewhat uncertain. This uncertainty led to the recent problems with the Rafferty dam project which has been referred to earlier in debate. A statutory process as called for in the motion before us would eliminate the problems of the current system. The environment minister is fully aware of this fact and has made public his intention to introduce legislation to