

is the integrity of the process and that process has been called into jeopardy by this government.

There is another integrity that we must look at, and that is the integrity of this government versus small towns and municipalities across this country who cannot become hostage to the incompetence of a government which simply does not understand what happens when tremendous hopes and aspirations are placed in a project and then that project is halted because of the government's incompetence.

The Prime Minister is fond of quoting from journalists. Let me quote from one of the most respected journalists in this country, Dale Eisler of *The Leader-Post* of Regina:

The federal government has bungled and abdicated its environmental responsibilities from the start. It has taken the intervention of environmental organizations like SCRAP and the Canadian Wildlife Federation to force Ottawa to fulfil its legal duties.

For the Tories, (Rafferty) simply could not be allowed to fail.

So by pushing it through now, Grant Devine can only hope to perhaps save some face.

Then he goes on to say:

What he can't hope to do is prevent Rafferty from being a lasting symbol to incompetence by Ottawa—

That indeed is what we are dealing with here, incompetence which has really let the people of southern Saskatchewan down. It makes no sense for the members opposite to stand up here and say, "Let's talk about the project". If the project is in jeopardy, it is because the members opposite have allowed this process to fail. It has allowed this process not to be able to demonstrate that indeed the project ought to go ahead.

The member opposite said that no one has said that Rafferty is unsound. That is not the question. That may have been the question in the 1970s, but the question today is, is it needed and is it the only way. What surely we are going to learn as we wind our way through the debates on Bill C-78 is that what we must be looking at is not simply an existing project and asking whether that project satisfies certain criteria, but is there indeed a better way, is that the only way to proceed. Surely to heaven the environmental assessment process must begin much earlier in the process. Members opposite fail to understand that. That is one of the major failings of

### Supply

Bill C-78 and it is one of the major failings in this government's attitude toward the environment.

We have raised here in this House the whole issue of secret deals. I have known the Minister of the Environment a long time. I like him and I respect him. I believe that he is a man of his word. I believe that this matter of secret deals must be cleared up. Today my colleague, the member for Ottawa West presented the text of an agreement that was allegedly reached at the September 5 meeting. The minister did not deny the existence of that agreement. I think he must. Article 4 of the document states that it is expressly agreed that the corporation may now proceed to do all that is necessary to complete the construction of the Rafferty dam.

Article 5 states that the minister agrees to issue revised terms of reference for the Rafferty-Alameda dams for the Environmental Assessment Panel in order to give full force and effect to the provisions of this agreement and which terms of reference shall only provide for review of the operation after its completion.

**Mr. Clark (Brandon—Souris):** Who signed this agreement?

**Mr. Martin:** The hon. member opposite asks who signed this agreement. I hope the agreement does not exist.

**Mr. Clark (Brandon—Souris):** Is it signed?

**Mr. Martin:** I hope that the whole thing turns out to simply be a balloon. The point that I would raise, however, is that the alleged agreement does do one thing very clearly and that is, it confirms the essential thrust of Bill C-78 which is to say that you assess a project after it is finished and indeed, that monetary compensation may well be sufficient in order to make up environmental degradation. There is no amount of money that can make up for environmental degradation that is enshrined in Bill C-78 and it is not acceptable to this side of the House.

I bow to you, Mr. Speaker.

• (1730)

**Mr. Cooper:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order and I hope you will not deduct it from the time of the members.