

ardship of our environment. To do that we need proper procedures and we need to honour them. We cannot tolerate the breaking of that basic responsibility.

Mr. David Walker (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, I would like to continue in the same vein as the previous speaker, my colleague from Winnipeg South Centre, who brought to our attention just how frustrating it is to deal with the government on issues of the environment.

Like any other corrupt government it knows what to say, how to print green papers, how to position itself, and how to buy public relations firms. It does not know how to deliver on the environment. When push comes to shove, this is the best example we have had of a government that does not care about the environment.

I am sure my colleague from Winnipeg shares with me the frustration of having a minister available to talk with us, but when we ask for a little extra time to pose a few more important questions, his colleague from Saskatchewan said: "No more questions. We do not want debate". I think this House deserves to have this question not only talked about, but we deserve to have ministers of the Crown come here to speak directly. I am sure my colleagues know this.

It is interesting to note that not only is Grant Devine being protected through this scandalous behaviour, but when you look at the senators and one story about who was appointed to the Senate most recently, there was a Senator Eric Berntson. What was Eric's big contribution to Canadian politics?

Mr. Edwards: Ah, come on. Let's be fair.

Mr. Walker: Well, if there is a second one, perhaps, during your time, you can bring attention to his second accomplishment. His first accomplishment is the defence of this dam site. It shows to what extent the Conservatives of Saskatchewan will go to promote a project and to protect their colleagues.

There is more at stake than this. When we were in the middle of the Oka debate, sometimes the House isolates one debate from the other, the government hung its whole extreme argument around the rule of law. There is a second side to the rule of law. First, it has to be applied in every circumstance if it is a real application of law. Second, it is made to protect the citizen from government, not the other way around.

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What do we have in this case? We have a government official, a premier of a province saying to us: "I don't care what you guys are saying, I am going ahead with it". We talk about the rule of law. Where is the application of the rule of law here? This is one of the most fundamental trespasses we can have against the environment, against federal-provincial agreements, against the law of the land, and the government is silent. No posturing, just get out of the way and let them do it. You would almost think there is a Saskatchewan election coming up within the next year, wouldn't you? I am sure many of my colleagues from the west share the frustration in dealing with the federal government.

The only thing we can be happy about in this sad story is that the protection of the western Canadian environment has finally become a national issue. After watching one Conservative government after another in the west avoid these issues, after watching this Conservative government since 1984, support these Conservative governments and ignore the environment, finally this little postage stamp of an area has become a national symbol on how we treat the environment.

As we watch this play, we can understand that every little corner of the country is important. It is not just the big cities. It is not just the big Hydro-Quebec projects we hear about. It is these little projects that make a difference in our country. You have to stand up for each one of these examples and say to people that this little corner is as important as this big piece of property over here. We have a total environment to protect, a total country at stake here. What this government fails to recognize is the importance of these small battles, or what start out as small battles, and which should not be a battle at all. It should just be accepted wisdom as how to proceed.

Lost in all of this, lost in the bickering back and forth in the House, is the plight of the people in that area. They had their expectations raised by a government that did not care about the environment, secretly supported by the federal government, which also has not shown much care to this whole thing. Between them, they set out a deal and told the people in the area of Estevan and surrounding communities that they would be helped out through this dam project.