

Supply

What we actually see here is that this deal still stands. It would have been much better if the minister had stood in the House and at least had the nerve to say: "Yes, I cut a deal with Grant Devine to save his political hide and we are going to keep fiddling around here till this thing is done and nobody can do anything about it." Instead, he got up and vague made threats about appropriate and necessary steps.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I would like to say it has been a pleasure to be involved in this debate. I hope the right thing is done in this case.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): The time allotted for questions and comments is limited to five minutes. Resuming debate.

[*English*]

Mr. Brian L. Gardiner (Prince George—Bulkley Valley): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to join in the opposition day debate today on a New Democrat motion moved by the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle. He has spoken in the House on numerous occasions during Question Period and in debate today. He has, as well, spoken about the impact of the lack of action by the Minister of the Environment as it relates to the Rafterty-Alameda Dam project. I also wish to refer to some of the comments from the member from Winnipeg who spoke so eloquently.

We are just asking for some simple yes or no answers, Mr. Speaker, which we have not been able to get from the government so far. Let us make no mistake as to what this debate is about. This is a debate about what kind of proper environmental assessment review process procedures we should have in the country. It is a debate about the failure of the 1984 guidelines that were developed by the then Liberal administration and the failure of the government and the members opposite to live up even to those guidelines. It is about the kind of projects like the dam project we are talking about today and others that I would like to comment on because they relate so directly to this debate on the proper assessment procedures we really should have in Canada.

I will get to that in a minute. It is important to understand that inviting some people down for coffee

and doughnuts is no substitute for a proper environmental assessment review process. We have heard, during the debate today, about some of the deals and the handshakes made by the Minister of the Environment with the Premier of Saskatchewan on this particular project and the squirming that they have had to try to see that this project actually gets through, whatever kind of review process that we have.

I have two examples that I would like to cite to give some examples of the confusion that we have from the government opposite on two projects and, as well, to comment on where we should be going in regard to environmental assessment. After all, as one of the previous speakers said, any good, corporate citizen and any good level of government will be prepared to subject their projects to due process, an environmental assessment review process, with some time frame and guidelines built into it. Nobody is suggesting that something has to be dragged out forever.

What we are talking about is a fairer process, one that informs and advises all participants—proponents, local governments, Indian bands, trade union movements, and environmentalists—so that all have their opportunity to have their say. If we look at the record of people who are active now in the environmental movement and the trade union movement, when making submissions—dare I say even industry—everyone is coming to realize that nothing gets done these days unless proper assessment is followed.

Let us just talk about those two examples. The first one is one that has a little story to it and it points out the confusion there is in the ranks of the government.

On a trip back home to my riding some time ago, I was speaking at a forestry conference and someone asked a very good question of me. The question was: "Mr. Gardiner, since it is in the EARP guidelines that any federally-initiated activity should have an initial assessment done under the Environmental Assessment Review Process Guidelines, was that done with the forest agreements?" I have spoken in the House before about how, despite previous commitments from the government to sign those tree-planting agreements, we do not have them. But I thought, what an interesting question. Here is what is generally thought to be a positive move by government. When we finally get some tree-planting agreements, whether they are in the Green Plan or what