

stances, we'll let them—there are a number of considerations and finally, there might be a provincial election. The environment, however, is so important because it involves the future of all mankind. That is why a clear stand must be taken, since this is not an area where concessions should be made, Mr. Speaker.

If we start making concessions, of course we can talk about foreign policy and the global economy, but the environment is the air we breathe and the water we drink, and that is why the future of mankind is at stake here. If a federal government cannot have clear authority over the environment, we are all wasting our time. If every province makes decisions for purely internal reasons, without considering what is at stake for our country and for the environment, I think we are not doing our job, and I therefore ask the Minister of the Environment to take action and do everything he can to put an immediate stop to this project until the requisite studies have been completed.

[English]

Mr. Speaker, to make sure that everyone listening understands why we are talking here and why we are in this situation, I would like to talk about what happened from the beginning to now. On February 13, 1986, Premier Grant Devine announced a multi-million dollar project. The Rafferty dam is to be used to cool the coal-fired generator at Shand. The Alameda reservoir water will be stored and released periodically. In August 1987, the Souris Basin Development Authority, set up by the province, released the results of its environmental impact study. Meanwhile, the province appointed a three member board of inquiry to hold public hearings. In February 1988, the province's environment minister approves work to begin on the dam projects after reviewing the board's recommendations.

Two years ago there were people opposed to the project. It ended up in court. The courts rejected and put this project on hold. Canadians are asking why the province of Saskatchewan wants to go ahead with it and why the minister is slowly, with all sorts of excuses, giving the opportunity for the project to continue. That is why my colleague from LaSalle—Émard said very clearly that this has to be stopped right away, otherwise the other provinces might look at the weaknesses of the federal government in this matter and proceed unilaterally like Saskatchewan did.

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, I see you are signalling that my time has almost expired. In concluding, I would like to take the little time I have left to quote our environment critic, the hon. member for LaSalle—Émard, who said that the piles of studies that preceded the release of the Green Plan would be so much garbage if governments allowed a couple of developers to ignore these regulations through injunctions. Our future is at stake—our collective environmental future. That is what the Official Opposition critic or the environment had to say.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): It being one o'clock, I do now leave the Chair until two o'clock this afternoon.

At 1 p.m. the House took recess.

AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 2 p.m.

STATEMENTS PURSUANT TO S. O. 31

[English]

IMMIGRATION

Mr. Alfonso Gagliano (Saint-Léonard): Mr. Speaker, a report to the United Nations on the Canadian Council of Churches study of mental health and social stress of refugee claimants in Canada was made public today. The reports states:

Canada's treatment of these large numbers of people is in direct violation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. If not remedied it will rank among the most significant mass abuses of human rights by Canada—

On December 28, 1988, in a downtown hotel in Toronto, the minister of immigration announced the plan for handling the cases of people in the system prior to the new law taking effect on January 1, 1989.

By the end of July 1990, over one and a half years from the announcement of an up to two year program, less than 20,000 cases had been completed. Of these, 16,179 had been accepted in principle and were in process of being landed, and 608 were rejected.

Almost all the claimants have now been in Canada for two years, many for four or more, and almost none have come out of the end of the tunnel.