

Supply

The minister must ensure that conditions exist that would allow the panel to conduct its inquiry. It is obvious that those conditions do not exist. That is why the panel resigned, because they could not proceed under the current conditions.

Therefore we maintain that the original court order is still in effect that now demands that the minister revoke that licence. Every day that passes when the minister does not revoke that licence, this federal government and the Minister of the Environment are in contravention of the court order. That surely is unacceptable, particularly from our own federal government.

There are some lessons to be learned in all this. First of all the big lesson is you do not mix the environment and politics the way this federal government and the Government of Saskatchewan have attempted to do it. There are all sorts of suggestions of deal making right from the beginning. The first licence was really part of a deal between the province of Saskatchewan and the federal government. Some of this seems to lead right to the door of the Prime Minister. It was the premier and the Prime Minister having friendly chats together making the deal.

Even with the present minister, we have all sorts of insinuations and suggestions, especially coming out of Saskatchewan, that there was some understanding between the federal government and the provincial government. In fact, in a very disturbing speech made by the president of the Saskatchewan Power Corporation, Mr. George Hill, last Friday he stated:

In January, 1990, Dr. Good (one of the same civil servants) implored me not to insist on putting a time limit on when the Panel had to report. He no doubt wanted it to look like they had all kinds of independence. He assured me that he would have control over the Panel, through the Chairman, who would be an employee of the Federal Environmental Review Office. It must be understood that this office, known as FERO, for Federal Environmental Review Office, is not independent from the rest of the Federal Environmental Department. The head of FERO reports to Dr. Good, Dr. Good had spun his web to include all these people. He assured me that he was in control and he would see that they acted expeditiously and report in short order, because after all, this project had already been reviewed twice.

That is a statement by the president of the Saskatchewan Power Corporation saying that he had the assurance of the deputy minister of the federal Department of the

Environment that he was able to control the panel and the workings of the panel.

That is a very serious charge. I hope that the Minister of the Environment will stand on his feet some time today and explain what Mr. Hill was talking about. Surely he can give us the assurance that the environmental review panel is indeed independent and not controlled by his department.

We must also really wonder about the motivations of the Saskatchewan government.

• (1130)

We understand that this project is to be mainly in the riding of the Premier of Saskatchewan, Mr. Devine. Of course, there are local spin-off benefits in terms of construction and jobs. Despite clear indications that this project makes no economic sense and makes no environmental sense, we very much expect that perhaps the only area where it does make sense is in terms of political sense for the Premier of Saskatchewan. He certainly has succeeded in whipping up local people who see the economic advantages to this project, for themselves, short-term. He has been able to mobilize these people and I suggest that the only way Premier Devine can get himself re-elected in his constituency is through these tactics.

An hon. member: He's buying the polls, even there.

Mr. de Jong: He is attempting, as my colleagues says, to buy the polls. Well, let me warn the Premier of Saskatchewan that it ain't going to do him any good because he is going down the tubes as well as soon as he screws up his courage to call a provincial election.

He is using \$1.6 billion of public funds from the province of Saskatchewan for a very dubious environmentally and economically sound project. The people of Saskatchewan have been burdened with tremendous deficits and debts because of the present Tory government in Regina. He is quite willing to put an extra \$1.6 billion on that accumulated debt just to assure his own re-election and I say, shame, shame, shame.

Of course, the premier does not want to have a full public inquiry. He does not want the public to know. In fact, earlier this year, people concerned with the project were questioning whether the Government of Saskatchewan was indeed complying with the agreement that they had made with the federal government in January of this year and they asked for all of the available documents. The Premier of Saskatchewan, on June 19 of this year, issued an order that all the files relating to the Rafferty-