

Private Members' Business

present time, environmental assessment regulations consist of environmental assessments and review process guidelines which only federal projects are required to follow.

The need for speedy action was reinforced on April 10, 1989, when the Federal Court halted all activity on the Rafferty-Alameda dam project because the process had not been followed. As a result of this decision, there is now a question in the minds of many about the correct administrative procedure for the environmental assessment of a federal proposal. In order to understand the need for the reform of the federal assessment and review process, it is important to look briefly at its history.

In June 1987, cabinet directed the environment minister to release a green paper to stimulate discussion on possible improvements, to undertake public consultations and to make recommendations for reform. From November 1987 to March 1988, public consultations on improving the EARP were held in each province and territory.

On October 20, 1988, the environment minister announced that the federal environmental assessment and review process would be legislated and strengthened.

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Every federal undertaking and every undertaking on federal lands will be subjected to a thorough environmental impact study. This was announced following year-long nation-wide consultations with environmental and other public interest groups, industry, academics, provincial and territorial governments.

Although they are excellent and much needed measures, they do not go far enough. A case in point which affected Manitoba was Saskatchewan's Rafferty-Alameda dam project.

Prior to April 1989, the uncertain EARP guidelines contributed to a situation with the Rafferty-Alameda dam project. From 1984 to 1988, planning for the project proceeded according to provincial, not federal, guidelines. The Federal Court suspended work because it concluded that all federal environmental matters had not been adequately addressed by the provincial assessment process.

There is a need for a federal environmental assessment act. It should clearly state who is responsible for what and how the federal and provincial governments can work together.

After the Federal Court's decision, public meetings were held to review the results of a project evaluation prepared early in the year by Environment Canada. An independent consultant, Vern Millard, chaired the meetings. As a result of Mr. Millard's report, the environment minister announced that the project may proceed but, only—and I say but only—if strict environmental conditions were obeyed.

In reconsidering the application of the Saskatchewan Water Corporation to construct the dams, the federal government adopted the position that Manitoba's water uses should be determined and therefore there should be mitigation for adverse environmental impacts. The minister said that while the dams will help reduce an annual average of \$640,000 in flood damage in Manitoba, the Manitoba government has expressed concerns that groundwater pumping may be required to augment water supplies in the project reservoirs. Minimum water flows received by Manitoba will continue to be governed by existing international agreements administered by the International Joint Commission.

On the water quality issue, the minister said that Manitoba, together with North Dakota, will have a direct say in the establishment of a proposed multi-jurisdictional water quality monitoring committee. In January 1988, an agreement was reached by Canadian, American, provincial and state government officials that requires parties to negotiate water quality objectives for the Souris River water as it exits Saskatchewan, flows into North Dakota and later re-enters Canada in Manitoba. These quality objectives, to be established within 19 months, well before the reservoirs are filled, will establish numerical values for certain parameters in order to protect present and foreseeable water uses in the Souris River water basin.

The objectives can be reached through such measures as adjustment of release rates, mixing water from Alameda and Rafferty reservoirs, and using the high-level rather than low-level outlets. The compliance will be strictly monitored. Also, Manitoba will have the oppor-