

Supply

the Chair. We could start with the hon. member for Saint-Léonard—Anjou, who will speak for ten minutes.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): The House has heard the suggestion by the Parliamentary House Leader of the Official Opposition. Does the House agree with this request?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment?

[*English*]

Mr. Clark (Brandon—Souris): Mr. Speaker, we have no difficulty with the Official Opposition proceeding in that manner if they choose to do so.

I might add that I suspect that we on our side will probably not do so, but it is only because the issue is so complex and needs such substantive argument that we will retain our 20-minute speeches.

Mr. de Jong: Mr. Speaker, on the same point. We have no objections. We do want some guidance from the Chair, though, in terms of what happens to the question period afterward. Is it understanding them that one can ask five-minute questions of each of the speakers?

Most probably, as the parliamentary secretary stated for the government members, most of our members as well will speak for 20 minutes. It is a complex issue. It does require some in depth understanding and some explanation.

We understand, as well, that the Liberals might lack this. They might want to speak for 10 minutes is to give us 10 minutes worth of platitudes, but again the record will show that.

An hon. member: Ten minutes of shallow breathing.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Your attention please. If I understand correctly, the House agrees with the proposal made by the Parliamentary House Leader of the Official Opposition. There are, of course, provisions that allow the members of the other parties to either take the full 20 minutes with 10 minutes of

questions and comments, or divide their speaking time as well, as long as they advise the Chair before they start whether they intend to take 10 minutes or 20 minutes. So that is understood. I now recognize the hon. member for Saint-Léonard—Anjou, for a ten-minute speech.

Mr. Alfonso Gagliano (Saint-Léonard): Mr. Speaker, I fully agree with my parliamentary House Leader. There is much I would like to say, but I prefer to give ten minutes of my speaking time to colleagues who will shed some light on the regional aspects and argue the importance of the federal government's role in environmental issues.

Mr. Speaker, when the Saskatchewan government decided to proceed with the Rafferty—Alameda project, our environment critic, the hon. member for LaSalle—Émard, said he was vigorously opposed to the Saskatchewan government's decision to go ahead with construction on the Rafferty dam, without having the requisite public hearings on the project's environmental impact.

Mr. Speaker, as you know, the history of this project goes back to February 13, 1986. Since then, there have been a number of developments. Studies were made, the licence was revoked and re-instated several times, and a number of conditions were set. Today, the latest decision by the Saskatchewan government contradicts a ruling by the Federal Court, and challenges federal environmental regulations. I hope the minister will set an example that will be clear to everyone concerned, and I hope he will do so as soon as possible—it is already late in the day—and that he will do everything necessary to stop this project. A clear stand is important because there are other projects as well.

For instance, I know that as far as Phase II of the James Bay Project was concerned, the Minister of the Environment was quite clear when he said that environmental assessments were necessary before they could proceed. So if the minister was that categorical for Quebec, the same should apply to Saskatchewan or Ontario, as in the case of any other program.

Mr. Speaker, this is not an area where one can conveniently say: now listen, it depends on the circum-