

In international, as in national affairs, Canada has been dealt a strong hand. It is our privilege to help to coordinate the economic policies of the industrialized world at the G-7 and the Economic Summit, to be the only country that is a member of the Commonwealth and a founding member of the Francophone Summit and to have a vested interest in the continued success of GATT.

But as a privileged nation, we also know our duty to offer our assistance in international development, in defence of human rights, in the relief of famine and suffering in areas of the world less developed or less fortunate.

[English]

And so, Mr. Speaker, as we meet again at the outset of this second session of the thirty-fourth Parliament, I am honoured to lead Her Majesty's Government whose legislative program has been placed before this House. Our priorities are clear. We will put our fiscal house in order so that our economy can remain strong and competitive. We will reinforce Canada's compassionate traditions so that those less fortunate will have their opportunity to grow as well. We will preserve Canada's environment so that future generations can enjoy it as we have. We will celebrate Canada's uniqueness so that the civility and tolerance of Canadians may be an example to the world. We will play our role constructively so that perhaps we can contribute to making the world a somewhat better place.

Much is a stake for Canada in the years ahead. There are few limits to what is possible if we as parliamentarians, as Canadians, occasionally set aside necessary partisanship and work together from time to time toward larger goals for the good of the nation. We hope that all Canadians will join us in realising the bright future which history holds for Canada.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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MOTION TO ADJOURN UNDER S. O. 52

RAFFERTY-ALAMEDA DAM CONSTRUCTION PROJECT

Mr. Speaker: I should advise the House that I shall interrupt the proceedings briefly to hear an application for an emergency debate from the Hon. Member for Winnipeg Transcona (Mr. Blaikie). I want to say to the

Hon. Member that it was my error that this was not heard earlier. I now recognize the Hon. Member.

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg Transcona): Mr. Speaker, I am glad the Minister for the Environment (Mr. L. Bouchard) and the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) are still here. The reason that I am seeking an emergency debate with respect to the Rafferty-Alameda Dam construction project is that since the House sat before Christmas it has come to the attention of the Canadian public, and I hope finally the Minister of the Environment, that federal lands are involved in this project. One of the contentions made by a previous Minister of the Environment of the Government was that there was no need for a federal environmental assessment review of this project because there were no federal lands involved.

It was my hope that the Minister of the Environment would have lived up to his responsibilities by now and called for that kind of an inquiry. He has not done that. I think it is an emergency. The project is about to begin and it is about time the Parliament of Canada had an opportunity to debate fully this particular project and debate fully whether or not the Minister for the Environment has lived to his responsibilities in this regard. I believe he has not and that he has let down the people of Manitoba, in particular, Manitobans whose concerns have not been taken into account so far.

Mr. Speaker: I will consider the Hon. Members comments. I should say to all hon. members and the public that it is, of course, a matter of considerable concern to many Canadians. Whether it is appropriate to seek an emergency debate, that is what I will consider.

Again, I want to apologise to the Hon. Member for not having heard his motion earlier this morning.

Hon. Doug Lewis (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I wonder if in rendering your judgment on whether or not an emergency debate is appropriate in the circumstance you could at that time give the House the benefit of your interpretation of Standing Order 52 (2) and 52 (3) that a written statement on the matter proposed to be discussed be delivered to yourself. Then in Standing Order 52 (3) it states:

When requesting leave to propose such a motion, the Member shall rise in his or her place and present without argument the statement referred to in Section (2) of this Standing Order.