

Supply

before was exactly the same kind of deal. We had a Minister of the Environment, who is late and not lamented in this House, who got up in the same way when questions were raised about Rafferty-Alameda and said: "There is no deal. There is no agreement. I am proceeding as proper" His own senior adviser on the environment, Miss Elizabeth May, had to resign her post to bring attention to the fact that there was a deal. The federal government had colluded with the premier of Saskatchewan to come up with a secret arrangement.

If lightning strikes once, it strikes the second time with this government. It is maddening and frustrating that on an issue that is so crucial to our constituents and to many other people in this country who believe that there has got to be a clear responsibility of the federal government to stand up against these big capital projects, the mega-projects that sort of ravage the environment, which have no test of sustainable development whatsoever, that the federal government, which is the last resort, when it meets the test, where do we find it? We find it signing secret deals, making secret accords to serve the political purposes.

We understand the political obligations of the Prime Minister and his cohorts and Mr. Devine. Mr. Devine has been his lap dog for the last two or three years: Meech Lake, GST and all the rest of it. But that is no reason why they should be so cavalier in their surrender of this very crucial issue.

I want to say this. There is clear action that this government could be taking. They do have instruments under the law. It is not sufficient to say: "Let's pass Bill C-78", because as I read Bill C-78, it will legitimize many of the actions that the minister is now taking to go ahead with these kinds of private agreements and not have the same requirement as the guidelines put forward. At least we now have a procedure that is out in the open and is more public, rather than the one that attempts to put it in the shadows.

This minister cannot get away with this bag of tricks. He will be exposed, as will his government, as being complete traitors to the cause of maintaining a proper environment. I want to say on behalf of thousands of farmers and townspeople in the Souris Valley of Manitoba, who have been seized of this issue for a matter of two or three years, who realize that they have had to rely upon these kinds of interjurisdictional controls, that this

is a government that once again has failed them badly and miserably.

I challenge my colleagues from the province of Manitoba, especially my Conservative colleagues, the member from Brandon West and others, to get on their feet and denunciate this action by the minister today. He has had his chance. He has been able to dance, and bob, and weave, and slither and slide for the past 48 hours, but he can do it no longer. He has revealed himself today for the charlatan that he really is, that he has no intention of bringing an end to this project.

I believe that it is up to members of this House to start putting the pressure on and put some backbone back in this minister so he will start realizing that he is not simply there to be an apologist for a provincial government, but to stand up for the rights of all Canadians and particularly, to protect those who cannot protect themselves. There is more than the environment at stake. Once again we are putting the entire credibility and legitimacy of the political process at stake because people have looked toward this government to try to defend it, to try to act in its interest. What do we find? A government that is trying to chisel its way out.

Mr. Speaker, I want to turn over that debate to my colleague, the member for Davenport, to continue with this attack. We simply say that we cannot allow this action to continue. We cannot allow this minister to get away with the clear and unmistakable slipperiness that he tried to pass over on this House today. There are necessary steps. We call upon this government to take them.

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg Transcona): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre having to do with the Manitoba situation and the refusal of the Manitoba government, the current Progressive Conservative government of Manitoba, to really take any strong action with respect to Rafferty-Alameda, given all the things that have happened.

• (1550)

It does not seem to be willing to take the Saskatchewan government to court. It does not seem to be willing to take the federal government to court over the GST like so many of the other provinces.

We see now in the post election period that the theme which often punctuated the election campaign of not too many weeks ago, that a Tory is a Tory is a Tory, seems to be coming through in spades. The Manitoba Conserva-