

*Government Orders*

project were to spend some time in Saskatchewan and get to understand a little bit about the naturalness to which Mother Nature has said "Let the buffalo roam on the hay for which I have provided it". But, you, the individual farmer wishing to make a living there is going to have to use more than a little initiative to make things work in the semi-arid region of Canada that we know as the prairies.

Mr. Speaker, if I may continue with the catastrophic situation, subject to the amount of time that you are willing to let me have in which to conclude, is a situation that is caused to be catastrophic by the involvement with those that have political agendas that have absolutely nothing to do with the protection of the environment.

We hear such absolutely silly arguments, saying that the construction of a reservoir might affect some grasslands. Obviously we cannot flood a piece of land without affecting some grasslands and some of those grasslands happen to be wild natural pasture that happen to belong to the federal government which, according to the courts, require that the federal government necessarily bind itself to an environmental impact study. Now, for what cause? For what purpose, other than to delay the project and to embarrass governments that are associated with that particular project?

I say to you, Mr. Speaker, that the entire catastrophe associated with the Rafferty-Alameda project is caused by politicians, not the validity of the project, not the contribution that the water will bring to the semi-arid portion of the prairies called Saskatchewan, not the likelihood that this will provide for some irrigation spin-off, not the likelihood and the very just economic reason of providing for flood control downstream in the United States area to which these people have agreed to submit substantial millions of dollars towards the causing of that project to happen, none of those are what relate to the catastrophe. Politicians have decided that they are going to take issue because the federal government decided there was perhaps a slightly more convenient way at one stage of the process to proceed with the project. So, no, I say, Mr. Speaker. There was nothing catastrophic about this project that is caused by the project itself, but by the politicians who have their hidden agendas and wish to cause embarrassment to certain governments.

• (1810)

**Mr. Brian L. Gardiner (Prince George—Bulkley Valley):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to come back in my speech and follow up on one of the questions that the member for Skeena put about some sections of Bill C-78 which I think are very important for us to consider, in particular when it relates to the question of first nations and aboriginal people in Canada.

I do not recall that I heard an answer from the member who just spoke. The member for Skeena posed such an important question. We did hear a lot of time being filled in, I guess, but did not hear an answer.

In any case, I am pleased to have an opportunity to speak today on a very important piece of legislation, Bill C-78, to legislate a federal environmental assessment process. I think it is clear today and on previous days that there has been considerable discussion about the weaknesses of this legislation and how it does not in fact result in the kind of rules and regulations governing environmental assessment that most Canadians are expecting from this government, given the rhetoric of the Prime Minister and others on their so-called Green Plan.

In fact, one of the comments that was made the other day at a news conference where one group of environmentalists gave the government an *f* on how it is doing on the environment, was that Bill C-78 is actually going to put in law the guidelines, which we already have. Those guidelines have become the force of law through the courts and this government has really refused to follow them.

I guess the mockery of the situation as it has developed around the Rafferty-Alameda and now the Alcan Kemano completion project really shows how much work has yet to be done on this legislation to see that we get something with some teeth and that we can all consider and review, that companies in good faith know what the rules of the road are and that other government departments know as well.

I have a couple of comments that I would like to make on the bill and then make reference to one or two specific examples that I think really shows the confusion on the government's part in current assessment procedures and what we may have as a result of this legislation.