

*Oral Questions*

**Hon. Stewart McInnes (Minister of Public Works):** As soon as I knew there was an investigation into this matter, I immediately gave the letter to the RCMP, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

[*Translation*]

QUERY WHY MR. HYLAND'S LETTER WAS NOT FORWARDED IMMEDIATELY TO RCMP

**Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby):** Mr. Speaker, for the first time, the Minister has admitted that he handed over Mr. Hyland's letter to the RCMP six or seven weeks after he received it. The people of Canada are fed up with a government which spends public money on gifts to Conservative friends.

My question is very straightforward, Mr. Speaker. Why did the Minister wait some six or seven weeks before handing over to the RCMP such an important and incriminating letter? Why didn't he hand it over immediately?

[*English*]

**Hon. Stewart McInnes (Minister of Public Works):** Mr. Speaker, the basis of that question, the basis of all the reports is that there are some facts of which they have knowledge which were not indicated in the letter.

I have indicated to the RCMP they can have all the material. I have given them all the material germane to this particular issue. If the Hon. Member has knowledge of some particular fact or correspondence, he should give it to the RCMP. The Hon. Member assumes there are incriminating facts in the letter.

**Mr. Robinson:** You have the correspondence.

**Mr. McInnes:** Let the RCMP make that decision.

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## ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

### LICENSING OF RAFFERTY DAM—MINISTER'S POSITION

**Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg—Fort Garry):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to raise a question concerning the integrity, veracity and credibility of the Minister of the Environment.

We have put questions in this House previously about the resignation from his staff of Miss Elizabeth May, senior policy adviser, in which she alleged there had been a political deal by which the Minister of the Environment would sign off a licence for the Souris Rafferty Dam project on the Souris River in exchange for the Grasslands Park project in Saskatchewan without undertaking any environmental impact studies or reviews on how it would impact upon the Province of Manitoba. These allegations have been said by the Minister to have no foundation.

We now have a secret briefing paper prepared by officials of the Department of the Environment given to the Minister before his meetings with the Premier and Deputy Premier of Saskatchewan in May in which it clearly states:

The Deputy Premier might offer a compromise linking an agreement on the creation of the Park to the early issuance of the IRIA license for the Rafferty/Alameda Dam.

This is a clear and direct refutation of the statements made by the Minister in this House and made by the Premier and Deputy Premier of Saskatchewan, and supports the allegations made by Miss May.

In light of this kind of evidence, is the Minister prepared to retract his previous statements and try to explain to the people of Manitoba why he went ahead and sold away their environmental concerns and responsibilities, to say nothing of his own responsibilities, for the sake of the kind of political deal that his Prime Minister wanted him to sign?

**Hon. Tom McMillan (Minister of the Environment):** Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member says that he has in his hands some leaked secret briefing notes to the Minister of the Environment documenting that the Minister of the Environment traded a park for a dam or a dam for a park. I invite the Member to read those briefing notes.

Prior to my meeting in May with the Deputy Premier of Saskatchewan, a meeting was scheduled between myself and him for December 16. Those are the briefing notes he has and the meeting never occurred. It was impossible for the two of us to mesh our respective schedules and arrangements. The briefing notes have no import. What is more, they were prepared by my officials in light of some conjecture, some speculation, by environmental groups in the west that the Province of Saskatchewan might—I stress might—link the Rafferty Dam with the formation of a Grasslands National Park. In light of that conjecture, the officials rightly advised me that the matter might be raised by the Province of Saskatchewan and in the unlikely event that it were, that the Minister of the Environment might respond accordingly.

The meeting never took place, Sir. Second, Saskatchewan never raised the issue. Third, I would not have acquiesced even if it had.

**Mr. Axworthy:** Mr. Speaker, I just simply point out to the House that the real answer to the question now is that the licence was issued without an impact study, and a deal was made on the Grasslands Park.

What better evidence do you need that this Minister is implicated in the most scurrilous sell-out of Manitoba environmental interests in the history of this country?

● (1440)

ADVICE OFFERED BY DEPARTMENTAL OFFICIALS

**Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg—Fort Garry):** I will ask the Minister another question about documents. In this House