

Supply

there are currently no plans to issue a stop order on the project under the NWPA.

What the minister is stating there is that he is not going to allow work to continue, yet the Saskatchewan government has now declared it is going to continue. My question to the government is this: What are you going to do about it?

Mr. Clark (Brandon—Souris): Mr. Speaker, let me respond to the first part of the hon. member's comments by noting that yes, this entire project has been of interest and concern to myself and, of course, to many members of my constituency.

The member is correct when he suggest that some of the principal opponents of the project reside within the constituency. I might also add just so that the information is before the House that there are also many supporters of the project residing within the Brandon—Souris constituency and I suspect that my constituents would want me to inform the hon. member that, indeed, the majority of the communications which I have received on this project actually favour it.

That is not to suggest that governments make decisions on the basis of the number of letters received in support or in opposition because governments have a responsibility to provide leadership and not simply to try to determine which way the political wind is blowing at any given moment. But I think the hon. member would want to have that information available.

The letter which the hon. member quoted with respect to a former colleague of mine at Brandon University, Professor Dolecki, was received from the Minister of Transport in which he referred to some information that would be received and the decisions that would be taken after the review panel had completed its work.

It is my understanding that we will be seeking the appointment of a review panel because that is what we are required to do under the law. We are anxious to receive the benefit of the work which has already been taking place.

As I indicated earlier in my remarks, the panel which has been in place for the balance of 1990 had reached step five in a seven step process. It had done an immense amount of background exploration. It met with the public on different occasions and it met with the

interested parties. I believe it is very important that the information which it was putting together was for the recommendations it would be making to the Minister of the Environment and which would in due course be made.

I can understand why the panel, as I have indicated, felt compelled to resign early this month. I expect, Mr. Speaker, that a well qualified panel will be asked to continue with that responsibility with the appropriate terms of reference. I anticipate that they will be able to make use of the information which has been gathered to date and it will be on with the process and the application of EARP as we have been doing during the course of 1990. The end result will be the provision of the information to the minister and consequently the appropriate action.

• (1200)

Mr. Bob Horner (Mississauga West): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for his comments concerning this difficult situation and especially his efforts to explain the difficulties that have marked the Rafferty-Alameda process.

Does the hon. parliamentary secretary feel that the Government of Canada has lived up to its obligations and its commitments regarding the environmental evaluation process?

Mr. Clark (Brandon—Souris): I guess the short answer to that, Mr. Speaker, is that I believe we have to date and we will continue to do so. We are at a very difficult period now, as one can expect, with the resignation of the panel, but we intend to fulfil those obligations as given to us.

If I might be permitted to add, because I know that the hon. member will be interested in knowing this, this had been a very difficult task. One of the reasons why it has been a very difficult task is the fact that the guidelines, which have now been given the force of law, are quite frankly inadequate and must be replaced. That is what Bill C-78 is all about.

I would hope therefore, if I am permitted an editorial, Mr. Speaker, that the hon. member will attend the debate tomorrow on second reading and lend his strong support to that legislation. We cannot permit the country to continue with the present guidelines being in place because they are not equal to the task which lies before