

to the Canadian people the commitment or lack of commitment of this federal government and the new Minister of the Environment to questions relating to the environment and how serious this government takes the environmental review process, especially when it affects megaprojects like the one we are debating today.

Let me start by saying, despite what some other politicians have claimed, that the New Democratic Party either here in Ottawa or in Saskatchewan is not opposed to building a dam there *per se*. If a proper process is followed, if there is an independent environmental review to show that no lasting negative environmental impact will occur because of this project, this project does make economic and environmental sense. We are totally and wholeheartedly for it. To be able to devise a way to allow southern Saskatchewan to have a lake, to have access to water would be a godsend.

There are many professionals and non-professionals who have serious doubts about the environmental effect and impact of this project as well as the economics. First let me comment on the economics. The Saskatchewan government wants to build two coal-fired plants in order to produce electricity. We can buy electricity cheaper from Manitoba. There are two coal-fired plants that have been mothballed in North Dakota. The infrastructure is there. We can buy electricity from those plants much cheaper than building the Rafferty-Alameda projects. Economically, it does not make sense to us.

Second, the Government of Saskatchewan claims that these reservoirs are needed as coolants for the coal-fired power plants, and that there is enough water in the Souris River to fill up these reservoirs. Various studies have shown that if the Rafferty dam had been built in 1912 it would not have filled until 1948 and that the Rafferty reservoir would not reach full supply level 97 per cent of the time.

In fact, the reservoir may never fill. The evaporation rate in the Rafferty reservoir would be as high as 75 per cent of the natural flows in any year. Instead of getting a lake some 70 kilometres long, which the Government of Saskatchewan is proposing, in fact what we will be getting are two algae-infested, green, slimy sloughs that will not be any use for recreation purposes, water supply purposes or for irrigation.

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One really wonders about the motivation of the provincial government in jamming this project ahead. The Saskatchewan government claims that it did an environmental study. Indeed, it did do an environmental study. But that environmental study has been criticized by the federal Department of the Environment, by the U.S. Corps of Army Engineers and by the American Environmental Protection Agency. These are three very legitimate public bodies who have looked at the project and have found the Saskatchewan environmental study to be lacking. In fact, the U.S. Corps of Army Engineers in their report stated:

The credibility of the quantitative results of both of the above model studies is severely limited by the lack of a model calibration and the verification based on historic data. Furthermore, the programs are highly simplified in that the normal variable flow, water temperature, and pH are held as constants, and the assignment of initial input concentrations and reaction rate coefficients is highly subjective.

In other words, what the U.S. Corps of Army Engineers said about the Saskatchewan environmental study is that it is highly subjective and highly simplified.

When officials at the federal Department of the Environment were talking about the Saskatchewan studies it stated:

There are a number of important information gaps related to assessing implications for federal responsibilities concerning this project. There are also ambiguities, errors and omissions with respect to technical information and impact predictions.

What we find is that very reputable organizations find tremendous fault with the Saskatchewan study.

Those parties who are very concerned about this project and the price tag of some \$1.6 billion were dismayed when a former Minister of the Environment, Mr. McMillan, issued a licence on June 17, 1988. It was necessary for the government to issue a licence because we are dealing with an international water. The Souris River originates in Saskatchewan, flows through the United States and comes back up into Manitoba. There is obviously federal responsibility here.

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It took us awhile to convince the government of the day, the one before the last election, that there was some federal responsibility here. A licence was granted on June 17, 1988 anyway. The conditions surrounding that licence are certainly suspect. We knew at the time that Mr. McMillan was giving the licence to the Province of Saskatchewan in exchange for an agreement for the Grasslands National Park. The federal government has