

Government Orders

Mr. Schneider: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that the member opposite, as astute as his experience in the House of Commons is, would tend to indicate and recognize that I am an expert on the subject to which I have spent some time speaking.

I would like to advise the member that I am not alone in being an expert in this particular category. I believe that the interest and the intent with which the government has proceeded with respect to Bill C-78 sees the member looking at a considerable number of experts on that particular subject on this side of the floor.

Therefore, I would not only like to thank him for his specific reference but for the opportunity to be able to point out that there are many experts, particularly many people with their hearts and souls behind this bill.

I would hope that when all members consider the development of this bill, we look at it for what it can be for Canada's aboriginal peoples and not try to make it the subject of much debate, which in effect simply prolongs the opportunity for providing the benefits of this bill to Canada's aboriginal communities and as well to Canada's environment.

The hon. member makes some reference to a catastrophic situation in Saskatchewan, and I would certainly like to address that. First, I had thought that it was unlikely that the question, comments and answer period following my remarks could pass without someone making reference to the situation in Saskatchewan.

I will agree with him that it is a rather catastrophic situation, but I believe I have a different perspective of that than he does. I had hoped that the particular situation in Saskatchewan, which has absolutely nothing to do with aboriginal lands, could be set aside for a time. This is the place for a debate on that subject, but perhaps not the time.

However, because the hon. member wishes to address that particular issue today, I would be only too happy to give you my perspective of what I deem to be a catastrophic situation in Saskatchewan.

Of course, he was referring to the Rafferty-Alameda dam.

Mr. Fulton: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is correct. I referred to the Rafferty-Alameda but I referred to it in

the preamble to a question. I am not sure whether the member wrote the speech he just gave or whether someone else did, but he made certain suggestions that once this bill becomes law those lands, which have been accepted by the Government of Canada for comprehensive negotiations, will have an EARP triggered upon them. I would like the member to be somewhat more specific and refer other members of the House and the first nations who are watching to the section of the bill to which he refers.

Mr. Schneider: Mr. Speaker, I would conclude that you are likely thinking, as I am, that that was no more a point of order than other things we have seen happen in another place constitutes any order at all within the elected body we represent.

I was leading up to the portion of the question to which the hon. member made reference. I was going to set aside any sarcastic references that I heard made with respect to whether or not I, in fact, had any input into the speech. Surely, I would hope that the hon. member would give me some benefit of the doubt and, in order for me to rise on this particular subject, say that I might at least have an interest.

Second, I likely did refer to some research material to put these remarks together. I am again—

Mr. Fulton: Mr. Speaker, the only reason I said what I said was because the hon. member read the entire speech. It is not usually the sign of someone who has prepared the speech themselves.

Mr. Schneider: Mr. Speaker, in spite of the gentleman's obvious physical advantage over me, being probably one foot taller and one hundred pounds heavier, I will totally disregard the insinuation that I do not know what I am talking about, which I think is essentially the point the hon. member is trying to make.

Similarly, may I reflect upon the intelligence behind the question.

The hon. member made reference to a catastrophic situation in the preamble to a question, Mr. Speaker, and I wish to address that before I get into the final portion of his dissertation. I think I have every right to do that.

The catastrophic situation is best understood and appreciated if any member who wishes to criticize that