

would report directly to the minister. It would be much more of an arm's length relationship than the one we have right now.

I have said on a few occasions that I would be very happy to have any constructive suggestions on how to improve Bill C-78. We have to get Bill C-78 through the House. We have to have a piece of legislation that will replace a guidelines order that was never designed as legislation. It is very hard to interpret. It is very ambiguous and is leading us into situations that I think all members would deplore. I urge the hon. member to give me his comments on Bill C-78 and to move along with Bill C-78 as quickly as possible.

I take it we will be debating Bill C-78 tomorrow and I will obviously have more to say at that time. We certainly need that legislation in place. It is, at the moment, a good piece of legislation and it might be improved. We have to move along and get that piece of legislation before through the House, through the Senate, and given royal assent as soon as possible.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois):** The hon. member for Davenport. There is only one minute.

**Hon. Chas. L. Caccia (Davenport):** Mr. Speaker, because of time limitation, I have a very brief question.

Would the minister assure the House that, as far as he and his government are concerned, it is his interpretation that the guidelines resulting from the Order in Council of 1984 are mandatory? Those are the same guidelines that were used by the Canadian Wildlife Federation when it took the action in court which resulted with the stopping of the Rafferty-Alameda Dam construction. In his view, are the guidelines mandatory?

**Mr. de Cotret:** Mr. Speaker, what I can tell my hon. colleague is that I certainly believe that once we have a court order, a court order is a court order. I will certainly not recommend any position to my colleagues in government that will lead the government to be in contempt of court. The court order is very clear and what I have been saying for the last half hour is that we will live up to the court order. There is no question about that in my mind and no question among my colleagues.

**Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg Transcona):** Mr. Speaker, just a very brief question. The minister keeps saying the government will comply with the court order. What we

want to know and what everyone wants to know is what the government intends to do about the fact that Saskatchewan is not complying with the court order. Surely, the federal government has a responsibility to make sure that, not only it complies, but the Saskatchewan government complies. What does the hon. minister intend to do about that?

**Mr. de Cotret:** Mr. Speaker, I was very clear. I said that, first, the government would comply with a court order. I said that we would appoint a new panel. I said that I was freezing the payments, and I also said that the government will take the necessary steps to ensure that court order is respected.

[Translation]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois):** The question and comment period is now over. Resuming debate. The Hon. Member for Hamilton East rises on a point of order.

[English]

**Ms. Copps:** I rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday the minister involved told the House that he was going to come forth today with some specific action on this issue. What we have seen is a minister of the federal Crown acting merely as an apologist for Grant Devine.

• (1540)

I would like to seek the unanimous consent of the House to allow the minister in the federal government to tell us exactly what he intends to do to stop construction.

[Translation]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois):** Order, please! I must regretfully interrupt the Hon. Member for Hamilton East, but Question Period is now over. You are starting up a debate and the time for questions is expired.

**Ms. Copps:** Pursuant to our Standing Order, I now seek the unanimous consent of the House to continue directing questions to a federal Crown minister concerning this major issue, because we would not want him to cling forever to the apron strings—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois):** Is there unanimous consent for the question and comment period to be extended?