

Supply

we are dealing with the guidelines. Let us get on with the guidelines, settle it and get it done.

What about the frustration of our people? One member of the opposition did mention the frustration. This has been a most frustrating thing for our people. It has been on again off again and there is the economic impact of that kind of situation. It is simply not fair.

What we are asking for in our area is fair treatment. We are asking the minister to proceed with Bill C-78 and put into place a new set guidelines that will do away with the past guidelines that were not working. Then it will be a new day for Rafferty-Alameda and a new day for sustainable development in Canada. We need it. Nobody will argue that. Nobody is arguing that we do not need some reasonable guidelines. We do need them.

I challenge this House and Canadian people. I want to say one more thing before I sit down which I emphasized. Don't pass judgment on a project that you do not know anything about if you want good, sound environmental guidelines. That goes for Conservatives, Liberals, New Democrats, all Canadians. We want to see a future for our children that will have sustainable development and a healthy environment to live in. We all want that. Somehow we have been painted in Rafferty-Alameda as being something else than environmentally sound in our thinking. That is not so.

I believe that we have piloted for the rest of Canada. May I say on behalf of my constituents that we have endured at times ridiculous assault on what has been said and done on this issue. I beg you in this House and I beg all parliamentarians to let some common sense prevail and let us do the right thing. With a new set of guidelines in Bill C-78 we should forge ahead for the betterment of not only Souris, Moose Mountain and Rafferty in southern Saskatchewan, an area that needs water, but for all Canadians.

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg Transcona): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the passion with which the hon. member speaks. He has spoken to me privately about this before and I know how he feels about it, but let me just take some of the things that he has said. In a way, he is

reinforcing the view that we have been putting forward in the House today.

He says that no one should pass judgment on this project unless they know something about it. All we are saying is that we have a process for passing judgment on the project that is designed to bring in people who will treat the matter with some objectivity. That is the environmental review panel. It is this panel which has now resigned because the Saskatchewan government continues to build the project, in spite of the fact that the review is going on. It is one of the reasons given for the resignation of the panel. It is not the dam itself that many of us are against. You spoke about the larger picture and problems that exist elsewhere in eastern and central Canada. I agree. But what is at stake at Rafferty-Alameda is how we deal with environmental questions and what kind of precedents we set.

In terms of your own statement about who passes judgment on these projects, we are saying that you cannot have a process set up to pass judgment on a project and at the same time have the project going ahead. Your own minister has just appointed another panel or says he is going to appoint another panel. Why? To pass judgment on the project. So how can you possibly get up and defend the fact that the Saskatchewan government intends to continue building the project while that very judgment that you say you want passed is in the process of being developed. That is the question. It is a question of process not a question of whether that area needs water. We all know it needs water. It is not a question of whether you care for the environment. We know that you care for the environment. It is a question of due political process.

Mr. Gustafson: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for that question and I would like to explain exactly what has happened in the process.

First of all this project has been studied many times, but let us just deal with the last study in which the committee was put in to review in early February I believe. It was five months before that committee got down there, at a cost of \$450 per member of a five-man committee per day. I think, in terms of process and guidelines, there should be some time limits, some