

Oral Questions

The hon. member knows that. At some point in time I hope he will show the political fairness to acknowledge that.

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THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Paul Martin (LaSalle—Émard): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of the Environment.

The government's ducking and weaving on the issue of the Oldman dam has caused farmers in southern Alberta great pain, the taxpayers of the country unnecessary costs, and it has shredded whatever credibility this government might have had left in terms of protection of the environment.

Recommendation No. 5 of the review panel's report deals with the failure to mitigate environmental consequences and the need to reach agreement with the Peigan band.

Does the government accept recommendation No. 5? If not, why not? If it does, how can it allow any build-up of water behind the dam until both conditions have been resolved satisfactorily?

[Translation]

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Madam Speaker, I was hoping that the member for LaSalle—Émard would have understood the answer to a preceding question put by the leader of the NPD and which was on the same subject.

The commission presented its report yesterday, and I do not know if the member has had the opportunity to take a look at it. The report recommends, among other things, the introduction of dress and agreement measures between the parties in order to maintain the dam open. The report contains 23 recommendations. We have rejected one, the very first one in fact, which would have the effect of eliminating all together the use of the dam. All other recommendations were retained, and we will ensure that they are implemented. That shows our interest in the environment.

[English]

Mr. Paul Martin (LaSalle—Émard): Madam Speaker, yesterday, the federal environment minister placed all the blame for the mess at Oldman on the lack of co-operation from the Government of Alberta. At the

same time the minister who has just answered, the Minister of Transport, said that the federal government rejected the review panel's prime recommendation because, he alluded, the federal government was afraid to do battle with Alberta.

If the federal government is not prepared to stand up for its own jurisdiction in cases where it publicly condemns the illegal actions of a provincial proponent, when in Heaven's name is it prepared to act?

[Translation]

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Madam Speaker, I hope this attempt on the part of the member for LaSalle—Émard to mislead people is unintentional because, in fact what the commission says, what it recommends is to close down the dam by opening internal diversion tunnels, and to let the river flow freely.

However, the commission, and not the government, recognizes that this option can create enormous jurisdictional conflicts. Consequently, the commission presents a second set of recommendations in order to minimize the social, economic, and environmental impact if the dam is operated. We have accepted this recommendation along with the 20 others which are part of this excellent report.

• (1200)

[English]

Madam Deputy Speaker: We will have a single question from the hon. member for Moose Jaw—Lake Centre and a single question from the hon. member for Hamilton Mountain.

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AGRICULTURE

Mr. Rod Laporte (Moose Jaw—Lake Centre): Madam Speaker, in view of the unavailability of the Minister of Agriculture, my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister.

Saskatchewan farm families have debt problems unlike those in any other province, yet the agricultural minister said Wednesday that he would instruct the Farm Credit Corporation not to obey any legislation by the province of Saskatchewan that would require lending institutions to lease foreclosed land back to the original owner for six years.