

Oral Questions

Mr. Sargeant: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the Prime Minister for that answer. Could he tell me now if, in his discussion with the President, he received any new assurances concerning future Garrison diversion construction? And further, could he tell us if the President simply reiterated the stand of former President Carter, or whether President Reagan proposes any new initiatives in this matter?

Mr. Trudeau: Madam Speaker, I would repeat what the Secretary of State for External Affairs said in an earlier answer, that the President gave unequivocal assurances that none of the money now allotted to that diversion would be spent in any way which could affect waters flowing into Canada. That is what we requested, and that is the firm commitment we received.

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• (1440)

THE ENVIRONMENT**GARRISON DIVERSION PROJECT—PROTECTION OF CANADIAN INTERESTS**

Mr. Jack Murta (Lisgar): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Secretary of State for External Affairs. It is in connection with the Garrison diversion. Since the minister indicated that further construction will not take place, presumably in the foreseeable future, until further negotiations take place between the two countries, can he indicate to the House what the government intends to do at the present time to ensure that Canada's interests in the Garrison question are protected?

Hon. Mark MacGuigan (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Madam Speaker, there was a United States note of December 1 which, I believe, is still considered operative by the new administration. Under that we are to have talks beginning later this month as to the details of Garrison. But I would correct the hon. member on one respect. The U.S. administration did not say that no works would take place, but that no works which would have any effect on Canada's interest would take place.

Mr. Murta: Madam Speaker, I suggest to the minister that that has been the position the American government has basically taken all along, that nothing will happen which will affect Canadian waters. Certainly from the point of view of Manitoba that kind of assurance is not good enough, because at some point the linkage will take place and water will flow north into the Manitoba water system.

I thought—and probably I will take this back—that there was some progress with the administration, but there does not seem to be any progress at the present time. Nevertheless, as we all know, Congress plays an important part in the general outcome of the decision. Is the minister now prepared to pick up on what the Prime Minister indicated last week, that he is ready to accept an all-party parliamentary delegation to Washington to lobby Congress on this very question, and to

impress upon members of Congress the importance of this entire question to Manitoba and to Canada?

Mr. MacGuigan: Madam Speaker, I have an open mind on that and will certainly be pleased to conduct investigations into whether it would be a useful step at the present time. It might be useful, first, to begin these detailed discussions with U.S. government officials which I believe will take place this month before we make a final decision on an approach to Congressmen. But at some point that may well be a useful step to take.

ACID RAIN—CHANGES IN UNITED STATES POLLUTION CONTROLS

Mr. Tom McMillan (Hillsborough): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of State for Science and Technology and Minister of the Environment. As he will know, on the eve of President Reagan's visit to Ottawa this week the United States Environmental Protection Agency announced plans to weaken substantially pollution control standards for new and expanding industries in that country. Since such sweeping changes to the U.S. clean air act would drastically increase acid rain in Canada, will the minister indicate what steps the Government of Canada plans to take to oppose those changes?

Hon. John Roberts (Minister of State for Science and Technology and Minister of the Environment): Madam Speaker, in a continuing way we are making representations to the United States government in relation to that problem. I will be visiting Washington at the end of this month to continue those representations.

Mr. McMillan: Madam Speaker, my supplementary question is directed to the same minister. The Canada-United States memorandum of intent on acid rain signed last August committed both countries to enforce vigorously existing environmental regulations. Does the minister believe that the plan to weaken the U.S. clean air act signals to Canada that the new Reagan administration does not intend to honour the provisions of the memorandum of intent?

Mr. Roberts: No, Madam Speaker. In the discussions with American officials, and again today in this House as the President spoke to us, the desire of the United States to live by that memorandum was affirmed. We believe—and I was encouraged by his words—that the United States will maintain the progress we made with the previous administration toward an international accord on air quality standards. I have every reason to believe that the schedule which was laid out will be maintained.