

*Oral Questions**[English]*

Given that decision, will the government be seeking an injunction to stop further filling of the Oldman reservoir until such time as the Federal Assessment Review Panel has completed its review?

Hon. Jean J. Charest (Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member will know, the Oldman decision rendered by the Supreme Court of Canada reflects the position that the government had stated. In fact I had stated on behalf of the government in front of the Standing Committee on the Environment how constitutional and environmental issues should be dealt with.

On the specific decision on the Oldman dam case, we are now examining the consequences of that decision and will make a determination of how we think we should proceed. As soon as we do that I will be happy to inform the hon. member.

Mr. Paul Martin (LaSalle—Émard): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the same minister. The fact is that the dam is now filling up and there is no time. The minister has had over 10 days in which to make a decision.

The problem in Oldman is that the federal government's jurisdiction was ignored by the provinces. In the future how can the federal government hope to gain the co-operation of the provinces if it fails in this particular instance to insist and to enforce its authority now that it has been confirmed unequivocally by the Supreme Court of Canada?

Hon. Jean J. Charest (Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, I am more than happy to offer an example of co-operation to the hon. member for LaSalle—Émard. The day after the decision had been rendered on the Oldman dam, the Government of Canada signed an agreement with the Cree, the Inuit and the Government of Quebec on an environmental assessment for the Great Whale Project, something that the hon. member and all members on this side of the House had wanted to ask. In fact I think we had repeatedly stressed to the hon. member, on that specific issue, how important it was for us, as a government, to seek the co-operation of all

parties when faced with these delicate problems or dossiers of environmental assessment.

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We intend to continue on that path with the same success.

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THE BUDGET

Mr. Brian Tobin (Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance.

The Minister of Finance has said repeatedly in recent weeks that Canada's economy continues to grow at a very slow rate, primarily because of a lack of consumer confidence. The Minister of Finance knows that consumer confidence is lacking because this government has refused repeatedly to change the economic game plan that has put Canada in the economic mess we are in today.

Given that Canada was given a new Minister of Finance in 1991, given that Canadians are waiting for some indication of change on the part of this government, can the Minister of Finance tell Canadians, at least today, whether or not his new budget, when it comes, will represent a departure from the existing economic policy of this government?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): I think the hon. member would agree, Mr. Speaker, that it is important to maintain consistent policies both from a domestic point of view and an international point of view.

One of those policies has been to bring down interest rates on an ongoing basis and to keep them down, as well as bringing down the pressures of inflation because in bringing them down you bring down prices and reduce the cost of living. That is important to all Canadians.

It is also important to get the fundamentals right so that we can have the kind of investment necessary to generate the kind of economic activity and to accelerate the restructuring and transition, the very painful transition that we are going through.

Canada is not alone in this. Canada is joined with many other countries which are experiencing the same thing. Collectively, as a member of the G-7, we are