

Adjournment Debate

concedes that nothing in either of those agreements would prevent the Canadian government from redirecting water to south of the border.

Mel Clarke, former senior trade negotiator for Canada and a strong opponent of the agreements says the FTA and NAFTA endanger Canada's control of its water resources. Noted resource economist Wendy Holm and the Rawson Academy of Aquatic Sciences agree.

It is interesting to note that annex 301.9 which specifically excludes the export of raw logs and unprocessed fish is silent on the exclusion of water from export. Indeed, article 1401 of the draft NAFTA document contained a specific clause relating to non-energy pipelines. Through this provision the NAFTA document extends the possibility of water exports to include transport by pipeline. This is certainly cause for grave concern.

Even though water exports can impact dramatically on the environment, the FTA ensures that environmental reviews will be almost useless unless water is specifically cited as an agricultural good in the FTA.

The chapter of the FTA which defines the use of environmental concerns as justification for trade restrictions specifically pertains only to goods other than agricultural goods. Therefore water export cannot be stopped for environmental reasons.

There is grave concern about water exports. In my own province there is particular concern. The new government in British Columbia has initiated a public discussion on water management and has included water export as an issue. It has specifically asked that the public provide their views regarding safeguards required for bulk water export.

The previous Socred government issued six approvals for bulk exports and twenty more are currently under review. In March 1991 a moratorium was placed on the approval of any more bulk export licences and in May, just a year ago, that moratorium was extended.

Canadians have reason to be concerned about NAFTA and water export. I ask this government to stop the NAFTA deal.

Mr. Peter L. McCreath (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to briefly respond to my hon. friend.

I have to say in all honesty that on this issue of water the NDP is doing what it is doing in a lot of areas with respect to NAFTA. It is trying to see bogymen in the closet and trying to convince Canadians that terrible, villainous, heinous things are going on that quite simply are not, as my hon. colleague has been told in response to questions raised in this House. Large-scale interbasin transfers of water for export would clearly be in violation of the Canadian federal water policy of 1987.

My colleague suggests that agreements signed by this government will allow the large-scale export of water. This is simply not the case and not true. Water in its natural state is not a product or a good capable of being traded any more than trees in the ground or oil and gas in the subsoil.

Only when water is harvested by taking it out of its natural state, allowing it to enter commerce by bottling it or shipping it in tanks for example does it become a good in the rules set out in trade agreements.

Interbasin transfers of water are something completely different as they do not involve the trade of water as a good but rather the diversion of water in its natural state from its existing course. Water in its natural state is not covered in any respect under any international agreement including the NAFTA.

The government is aware of the concerns of Canadians in this question. I note that my colleague's own province of British Columbia has imposed a moratorium on water export that reflects our federal water policy. This government's position on water export is clearly stated in the federal water policy and the implementing legislation of both the Canada-United States Free Trade Agreement and the North American free trade agreement. Nothing in these agreements gives either the United States or Mexico access to Canadian waters.

The bottom line is that Canadians governments, both now and in the future have the freedom of action required to regulate the exploitation of our water resources.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): The motion that the House do now adjourn is deemed adopted. The House therefore stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

The House adjourned at 5.41 p.m.