

have you, have they been determined by the government to be properly evaluated?

In the Committee on Forestry, when the Minister of Forestry appeared, he said, to the committee: "No, we have not done that, Mr. Chairman." So there was a bit of a gasp. Here is the federal Minister of Forestry admitting that he has not even followed his government's own guidelines. Then, one of his officials kindly interrupted and said: "Well, Mr. Minister, actually they have been evaluated. We do have some initial assessments done of the forest agreements." Of course, I used my opportunity jump in and say: "Well, that is good. Let's table them. Let us take a look at them." It should be good news. Generally speaking, tree-planting agreements are good news for all of our country.

• (1640)

It took a few letters from the Clerk to the minister and some officials to find out where these initial assessments are. The minister said that they did not exist, but then was told by his officials they did exist. It took a bit, but we finally got a letter. It was one of those "I regret" letters which advised me that no, this was not done after all. It was a case where the minister was right for all the wrong reasons. It shows just how much confusion there is in the government's own ranks in what could potentially be one of the most important departments in the country, the Department of Forestry.

I will move now to a question I had on a statement in the House today with regard to the Alcan Kemano Completion Project in northern British Columbia and the decision of the government on Friday to exempt that project from the environmental assessment process. It is incredible!

The Prime Minister, when he was Leader of the Opposition in 1984, made an unequivocal commitment that that project would be subject to some kind of environmental assessment through due public process, with public hearings and what have you. We have had a few coffee and doughnut sessions, but that is about it. We have at least one retired fisheries biologist and another expressing his concern and opposition at the time and he was familiar with others.

A retired official spoke at a meeting in Vanderhoof in my riding on May 26. I would like to put this on the

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record because it is an incredible allegation that I advised him was a serious one. I raised it in the House today and I have written to the Minister of Justice to ask for an investigation. This is with regard to a project which is massive in scope. It will reduce the flow of the Nechako River, a major tributary of the Fraser, in some cases by more than 50 per cent. It likely could impact the Fraser River by a reduction of as much as three feet in flows at certain times of the year. This is a massive project which Ministry of Environment officials from the province of British Columbia are now expressing their concerns about the settlement agreement, the federal-provincial Alcan Company agreement. Of course, the regional district is expressing its concerns.

I do not know how many of you have read *The Omineca Express/Bugle* of September 12 in which there is a report on the engineering study which lists a host of the other problems resulting directly from the settlement agreement, which the government insists does not have to be subject to an environmental assessment. This is it for those people who are concerned about this debate and this issue. This is what it takes, one page, one 8-1/2 by 11 sheet of paper to say that the environmental assessment and review process guideline order does not apply to the project known as the Kemano Completion Project. It goes on to mention a couple of dates, and what have you.

It is incredible because the allegations now being made by retired fisheries biologists leave me to believe that the same confusion in the Department of Forestry and the confusion we have over the Rafferty-Alameda, shows that the government is out of control when it comes to environmental assessment. I will read the quote, Mr. Speaker, and then just quickly wrap up. I am quoting from *The Prince George Citizen* of May 28:

"I think this is a classic example of how to abandon a resource. It's a classic example of how to misuse scientists. And it's a classic example of getting public servants to put a good face on a bad decision,"—

"This department may well be ready for an examination of the way it does business."

There is no better reason to have a full environmental assessment of that project than some of those quotes and comments from that former Fisheries and Oceans biologist who is expressing his concerns about how this is proceeding.