

Oral Questions

Could the Deputy Prime Minister advise the House whether or not he is aware of the circumstances that led to Mr. Reynolds' resignation, and whether or not he is now prepared to announce that the Government of Canada will conduct full, public hearings into Alcan's Kemano II project?

Mr. Lee Clark (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that the differences which occurred in the committee last week between the hon. member and the minister, and which have subsequently been debated throughout the press in British Columbia, have nothing whatsoever to do with this House.

With respect to Kemano, itself, I can remind the hon. member, as was indicated on earlier occasions, that the project itself was studied. There was a panel which examined it very thoroughly and the public had an opportunity to participate in that process. It is the opinion of the government and the opinion of the relevant authorities in the province of British Columbia that the agreement that was signed with Alcan was consistent with the spirit of the EARP guidelines order.

Mr. Jim Fulton (Skeena): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is directed to the Deputy Prime Minister. I hope the government does not dig a hole any deeper than it already has. Five Ministers of Fisheries in a row promised full public hearings into Alcan's Kemano II project. The present Prime Minister, in writing, promised that there would be full public hearings into the Kemano II project.

On October 12, this government exempted the Kemano II project from full public hearings, the only project in Canadian history ever exempted.

Having learned from Rafferty-Alameda, having learned from the Oldman, and hopefully having learned in relation to the James Bay II and Point Aconi, would the Deputy Prime Minister show some justice and show some leadership on the day before the Green Plan and announce there will be full public hearings into the largest hydro project presently under way in Canada?

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

• (1450)

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member knows, this project has been the subject of a detailed examination of fish, fish habitat, and other environmental issues.

I remember, as a member of Parliament, sitting in the House and seeing that member congratulate the then Minister of Fisheries and Oceans when he introduced the Kemano measures that were announced when the agreement was signed with the province of British Columbia. It is nice today for this NDPer to sit on both sides of the fence, but he should come clean with Canada and tell the people that he approved of that a couple of years ago.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

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POVERTY

Mr. David Walker (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of National Health and Welfare.

The minister knows that the new reality in Canada is that 1.4 million people are using food banks and 40 per cent of those people are children. The minister, when asked about this in the House in the past, has given a lecture on federal-provincial relations, but the Canada Assistance Plan, which the federal government operates, has guaranteed adequate assistance to those in need. That is a guarantee made by the Parliament of Canada.

Can the minister tell us today what his government means by adequate assistance when so many people cannot feed themselves, clothe themselves, or house themselves?

Hon. Perrin Beatty (Minister of National Health and Welfare): I am pleased to do precisely that, Mr. Speaker. The commitment of the government is to do everything it can to eliminate poverty in Canada.

During the tenure of this government important progress has been made in terms of lifting Canadians out of poverty and, as long as any Canadian remains in poverty, it will not be satisfied. The government wants to see continued measures being taken to give poor people the ability to support themselves. It will continue as well