

Oral Questions

for fisheries in those river systems? Could the parliamentary secretary inform this House of the facts?

Mr. George Henderson (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question, because he appreciates the concerns of the salmon fishery in British Columbia. The hon. member is quite correct inasmuch as the Aluminum Company of Canada has cut the water down to 500 cubic feet per second. We have asked our officials to look into this situation. I think within the next few days we will be able to make sure that the water rate over that dam is back to 1,000 cubic feet per second.

Mr. Miller: Madam Speaker, I think the House should be aware that the reduction of that flow is not for smelter purposes but is for the sale of hydroelectric energy to B.C. Hydro and then later to the United States.

I should like to ask a question about Kemano II, which is a project that will influence 40 per cent of the B.C. salmon industry production in the Skeena River, the Fraser River, the Nechako River and the Dean River. Has the minister any plans, in co-operation with the British Columbia government, to call for a full public inquiry into Kemano II which, if it goes ahead, will further jeopardize all salmon production in those four rivers and reduce the income of the B.C. salmon fishermen, shore workers and those engaged in processing?

Mr. Henderson: Madam Speaker, I indicated in the House the other day that the minister had stated he was in favour of a public inquiry into the Kemano II project. This is the position of the department. I will bring the hon. member's question to the attention of the minister and get back to him with a further answer at a later date.

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HEALTH AND WELFARE**HIGH LEVELS OF ASBESTOS DUST AT CERTAIN AIRPORTS**

Hon. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of National Health and Welfare. Yesterday, the government of New Brunswick was forced to close its principal office building in Fredericton because of unacceptably high levels of asbestos dust. Tests are currently under way at Toronto airport by the ministry of transport with regard to unacceptably high levels of asbestos dust found in certain facilities in the airport.

Is the minister, on behalf of the government and in pursuit of her responsibilities for national health, conducting tests in all federal government buildings to determine whether there are unacceptable and dangerously high levels of asbestos dust, especially in buildings erected prior to 1972?

Hon. Monique Bégin (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Madam Speaker, further to questions on that topic relating to the airport situation which were asked last week, I checked with the department and was told that regular monitoring was taking place. I was not informed of any specific critical situations such as the hon. member seems to be suggesting. I will inquire again in the department. If the hon. member wants to give me more detail, I shall, of course, benefit from his knowledge.

Mr. McGrath: Madam Speaker, perhaps by way of a supplementary question I could suggest to the minister that in view of the fact that a number of schools in Canada have had to be closed because of dangerously high levels of asbestos dust, and the incident in Fredericton yesterday, as well as the incident at Toronto airport where 115 Government of Canada employees have had to be monitored and tested because of exposure to high levels of dust—surely in the light of that evidence it would be incumbent upon the minister to order a full-scale monitoring of all government buildings. Has she done so? If not, why not?

Miss Bégin: Madam Speaker, I think I have very clearly and frankly said that I have not ordered such a monitoring. The hon. member is speaking of a matter where the provinces are all actively involved. He mentions schools and federal buildings. It was obvious in my first answer that I have not been informed of any critical situation in which I had a given, direct responsibility; but I shall inquire as soon as we leave the House.

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HORTICULTURE**FLORIDA TOMATOES—EFFECT ON DOMESTIC MARKET**

Hon. John Wise (Elgin): Madam Speaker, may I put a question to the Minister of Agriculture further to the subject I raised earlier today which relates to the very serious situation in the province of British Columbia regarding the excess importation of Florida field tomatoes to the extent of displacing about 50 per cent of the domestic market.

Is the minister aware of the problem, and has he had any discussion with the British Columbia coastal vegetable marketing board? What action does he intend to take on this subject?

Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture): Madam Speaker, I am aware of the problem. Our agricultural liaison officer is making an inquiry but I have not seen the report yet. I have seen the suggestion that the British Columbia marketing board or association made. They are asking for immediate border controls and we are considering that request at the present time.