

Oral Questions

mechanisms by which we can have greater assurance of that.

In addition, the aircraft resources of our department and others, are involved in tracking, in trying to identify aircraft and ensuring that unidentified aircraft do not enter Canadian air space.

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THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Simon de Jong (Regina—Qu'Appelle): Mr. Speaker, my question is addressed to the Minister of the Environment.

As the minister knows, the Saskatchewan government has announced it will resume construction on the Rafferty-Alameda dam. Even before the review panel has had a chance to meet, the government is proceeding with the project. The Government of Saskatchewan is thumbing its nose at the federal government and at the laws of the land.

Does the minister not agree that not only is this decision a violation of his agreement with Saskatchewan but also a violation of the spirit of the federal court order of last December?

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, we have been informed of certain activities that the Government of Saskatchewan would like to do, relating to the Rafferty-Alameda dam project.

We are in the process of checking out what those activities are. If we find out that they are not justified by safety reasons and not identified as such by the Independent Design Board which has been set up for that purpose by the terms in the agreement, we will step in and take the proper decision. We will not accept that the spirit of the agreement be violated.

I am sending a letter today to my colleague, the Minister of the Environment of Saskatchewan. I intend to speak with him on the phone today also. I would like to know what kind of work is being done. It might be that there is no problem. Maybe they are justified by safety reasons. If not, we will have to go back to the agreement and make sure it is respected.

Mr. Simon de Jong (Regina—Qu'Appelle): Mr. Speaker, this is becoming a farce.

It is estimated that around 80 per cent of the construction will be completed by the end of the summer. Already we have reports from Saskatchewan today that some panel members are considering resigning, because it is a farce.

Why will the minister not act? Why will he not stand up in his place and state that he is revoking the licence until there is a proper environmental review and he can say to the Province of Saskatchewan: "Yes, you can proceed." or, "No, you cannot proceed." First, let's revoke the licence and have a proper environmental review.

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, we know that we have to verify the kind of work that is being contemplated now.

That being said, we should believe that this issue has been dealt with very well by the Saskatchewan authorities. They are being very responsible. They have accepted an agreement without any precedent in the world. We have agreed to stop the work on this dam.

There is a full-blown assessment going on, and we will soon know when the work can be resumed. In the meantime, I intend to talk with my fellow minister to make sure that the agreement will be respected.

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[*Translation*]

CONSUMER AND CORPORATE AFFAIRS

Mr. Jean-Pierre Blackburn (Jonquière): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. Like many other Canadians, the people in the riding of Jonquière wonder whether companies will really pass on to consumers the difference between the present tax, which is 13.5 per cent, and the new, lower 7 per cent goods and services tax.

How does the minister intend to ensure that companies will actually pass on the benefits of this tax reduction to consumers? Will there be a special mechanism or a review board to ensure that companies reduce their prices?

Hon. Pierre Blais (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Minister of State (Agriculture)): Mr. Speaker, of course, as the hon. member pointed out, the government will take all necessary steps to ensure that businesses that benefit directly from a 13.5 per cent reduction in inputs will pass on to consumers the