

Oral Questions

figures that could be involved. However, no formal request for an impact study has been received because the Canadian position is to stay away from tariffication, altogether.

We are advocating the strengthening of article XI. That is the Canadian position. It has not changed and it is obvious to me that we do not intend to change it.

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[English]

WESTERN GRAIN TRANSPORTATION ACT

Mr. Len Taylor (The Battlefords—Meadow Lake): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport.

The Supreme Court has said that the Minister of Transport was the decision-making authority in the Oldman dam case. The Minister of Transport would also be the decision-making authority with regard to possible changes to the Western Grain Transportation Act.

Given that the Minister of Agriculture has initiated cross-Canada talks relating to possible changes to the WGTA, has the Minister of Transport undertaken his responsibilities and initiated an environmental assessment process as the Supreme Court and the government's own guidelines have said he should?

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, the judgment of the Supreme Court was handed down a few days ago. We in the department have started examining the contents and the repercussions of this judgment on the involvement of Transport Canada in these matters.

Mr. Len Taylor (The Battlefords—Meadow Lake): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is for the Minister of the Environment. The Oldman dam decision is quite clear. It says that the environmental impact assessment was a planning tool that must be completed during the decision-making phase and it must take into account social economic factors.

Is the Minister of the Environment prepared to exercise his responsibilities for the well-being of the environment and advise the Minister of Transport of the full scale of his responsibilities, or is he prepared to

immediately initiate an EIA of the proposed changes to the WGTA?

Hon. Jean J. Charest (Minister of the Environment): The decision of the Supreme Court of Canada in the case of the Oldman dam has far-reaching consequences, as the the hon. member will know. The Supreme Court seemed to say about the present guidelines that there are two elements that would kick in in an environmental assessment process: (a) a federal jurisdiction being involved and (b) an affirmative regulatory power. These conditions are cumulative. After that the federal government would be asked to act upon that.

We are still examining the consequences of this ruling of the Supreme Court. Once again, I think we have to realize that they are far reaching. We will examine the consequences and get back to the member as soon as we have a good idea of what we think our course of action should be.

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[Translation]

GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

Hon. Jean Lapierre (Shefford): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of State for Agriculture. He just told the House that the government would never agree to a tariff system.

Will the government promise not to sign any agreement at GATT that would go towards a tariff system? Is the minister prepared to say the government will never sign any agreement whatsoever that would be a threat to the four pillars of Quebec agriculture?

Hon. Pierre Blais (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Minister of State (Agriculture)): Mr. Speaker, I realize that members of the Bloc québécois would like to make some political capital out of all this. However, if they really want to scare Quebec farm producers and the dairy industry, perhaps the members of the Bloc would care to explain to farmers the risks involved in separation. Producers who have 48 per cent of our industrial milk quotas may wonder what happens to Quebec farmers after separation! I think that is a far greater threat, whose consequences are not even known, while at GATT our position is clear: to defend Quebec