

Oral Questions

economists have expressed serious doubts about the findings and the methodology used by Dr. Carter.

In light of all the controversy created by this report, is the minister now willing to let farmers decide the issue. Can he assure us today that no decision will be made until a consensus is reached among all the stakeholders?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Pierre Blais (Minister of Justice, Attorney General of Canada and Minister of State (Agriculture)): Mr. Speaker, since my colleague is not here, I will say that, indeed, this study, which was made public on April 19, is being reviewed by officials of the department and that my colleague, the Minister of Agriculture, has had several meetings to that effect.

When we talk about the market for barley, it is important to make a distinction between the national and international markets. This does not at all jeopardize the Canadian Wheat Board and its operations. I believe that, in due course, the Minister of Agriculture will announce how he will follow up on this particular issue.

[*English*]

Mr. John Harvard (Winnipeg—St. James): Yes, and we are concerned about that follow-up, Mr. Speaker. We think it will undermine the Canadian Wheat Board.

My second question is for the same minister. If there were a continental barley market we could not discount the possibility of American retaliation. It is feared that the U.S. would slap on import quotas or fees if private entities are allowed to sell barley directly into their market. If the minister does not want to believe me, he just has to check the record.

Is this not one more reason why the minister should be listening to producers and oppose a continental barley market?

Hon. Pierre Blais (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and Minister of State (Agriculture)): Mr. Speaker, as you know, many companies, producers and associations have indicated that they want to have some alternatives to the Canadian Wheat Board. The

system we have is good but it is not perfect. What we are trying to do is improve it, as we have done in the past.

We have done a lot with the free trade agreement to bring more competitiveness into the North American market. It is working well.

I remember my hon. colleagues opposed everything we did to have a stronger market in North America and in the rest of the world. I think so far, so good. If we can do anything to improve the system we will do it.

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THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Brian L. Gardiner (Prince George—Bulkley Valley): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans. It relates to the government's refusal to conduct a full and proper environmental review of the Kemano completion project, a major water diversion project in northern B.C. Officials from the minister's own department say there are some 83,000 pages of information on this project in the government's possession.

Will the minister release all of this information to the inquiry that has been launched by the B.C. government so that we can get to the truth behind this project?

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency): Mr. Speaker, we are perfectly satisfied with the agreement that was entered into by the British Columbia government and the federal government several years ago on this project.

We are co-operating with the provincial inquiry that has been launched into the project. We have told them we will give them any assistance that we can and we will give them any information that is deemed relevant from the point of view of our department. We are satisfied that our responsibilities for environmental assessment have been met.

• (1500)

This inquiry that is now under way is entirely a provincial matter. We are co-operating with them and we will continue to co-operate with them.