

U.S.S.R., Mr. Gorbachev, last week, with respect to renewing Canadian wheat sales?

[*English*]

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister, President of the Privy Council and Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, that issue did come up in the course of the discussions with the Soviet delegation. We were very encouraged by the prospects of renewing the long-term agreement. We are also encouraged by the fact that they expressed an interest in some immediate additional purchases which members of the Soviet delegation will be dispatched to discuss with officials here in Canada.

We hope that, not only will we be able to negotiate a renewal of the long-term agreement, but we might be able to orchestrate some additional sales at the same time.

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is directed to the same minister. The minister will know that the Americans concluded a massive sales deal with the U.S.S.R. over the weekend. In fact, it is for 50 million tonnes over five years. He will know as well that Mr. Gorbachev really had very little choice if he was going to get most favoured nation trade status, and he may not yet.

What impact will this particular sale have, coupled with the impact of the U.S. Export Enhancement Program, which provides huge subsidies to U.S. farmers, on our own wheat and other grain sales to the U.S.S.R.? Is the Canadian farmer gradually, little by little, being squeezed out?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister, President of the Privy Council and Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member talks about a massive sale, and then he talks about a massive contract for a long-term agreement. They are two quite different things. What is negotiated under the long-term arrangement are the minimum sales.

We have had long-term agreements with the Soviet Union for a long, long time. We are considered as one of the reliable suppliers to it. It likes doing business with us. We will be seeking a continuation of that long-term agreement, hopefully in an expanded form.

As I indicated to hon. member, we were encouraged by the response of the Soviet Union. We have done business with it in the past. We are doing business with it now

and we are going to continue to do business with it in the future on behalf of the Canadian farmers.

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THE ENVIRONMENT

Mrs. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Acting Minister of the Environment, my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister.

In 1987, both the Prime Minister and the Minister of the Environment endorsed the report of the United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development. The keystone of that report was that there be full public review of the environmental effects of government policies.

How can the government justify then exempting government policies from its own environmental legislation, legislation that has already been too long in the waiting?

Hon. Frank Oberle (Minister of Forestry): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of the Environment is in Toronto today officiating at the celebration of Environment Week. At that event he is pointing out once again the importance of international co-operation in meeting the objectives that need to be met and the Canadian government's commitment to the international accords that have been signed.

As well, my colleague is in Toronto to point out to Canadians how important it is that each individual gets involved in environmental questions. My hon. friend can take from that that consultation with Canadians is high in our priority before we begin arbitrarily to legislate targets that cannot be met.

Mrs. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West): Mr. Speaker, back to the question. It is nice that the minister is off celebrating, but it would be better if he was back here doing something about the environmental assessment legislation that we have been waiting for for years.

I will give the minister another chance to answer the question. The question is quite simply this: Given that we have been waiting years for environmental assessment legislation, given the rumours that it is being watered down from even the present guidelines, and given the fact that the government has totally ignored three court decisions that told it what its duty is for environmental assessment, how can the minister or anyone else expect Canadians or international governments to take this government seriously when it wants to