

Oral Questions

Mr. Cassidy: Mr. Speaker, the process is a total shambles and the Minister knows it. What she says is happening now should have occurred some time before the end of October so that Canadians would have had an adequate chance to look at this agreement.

[Translation]

PROTECTION OF QUEBEC FARMERS

Mr. Mike Cassidy (Ottawa Centre): My supplementary question to the Minister is this: The Quebec Minister of Agriculture has indicated that the Quebec Government would no longer support the trade agreement with the United States if the interests of Quebec farmers were not recognized in the final text of the Agreement, insisting that Canada should retain in its trade deal with the United States its power to impose quotas on farm products under the GATT.

Does the Agreement take into account the wishes of Quebec farmers? Or is it another example of the Canadian Government ignoring a Canadian industry?

Hon. Pierre Blais (Minister of State (Agriculture)): Mr. Speaker, if my friend the Hon. Member from Ottawa Centre had taken the trouble to check the statements which I personally made to Quebec farm producers last week—when I reiterated that their interests would be fully protected especially under the GATT and the other relevant clauses.

I have not yet had an opportunity to meet an NDP Member with enough intestinal fortitude and courage to tell the truth to Quebec farm producers. When the time comes, I will not be afraid to challenge any of you, friends, on the hustings!

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[English]

CANADA LANDS COMPANY

SALE OF EXPROPRIATED MIRABEL LAND—REQUEST FOR APPOINTMENT OF ROYAL COMMISSION

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Deputy Prime Minister in the absence of the Prime Minister. It concerns the operation and disposition of lands by the Canada Lands Company at Mirabel. I have in hand a copy of documents in a lawsuit dated September 2, 1987, which has not yet reached trial stage so I understand that under the rules of *sub judice* I can raise the issue. In this lawsuit, an expropriated property owner, Mr. Gerard Poirier of Mirabel, is suing 2434-3972 Quebec Inc., the Canada Lands Company and others, alleging that he was coerced into giving up his right to buy back his own property.

In view of the fact that this incident is the second in two months questioning the practices of the Canada Lands Company, a Crown corporation directed by a relative of the Hon. Member for Joliette (Mr. La Salle) and former Minister of Public Works, will the Deputy Prime Minister now do the

right thing and appoint a Royal Commission of Inquiry into the operation and the disposition of properties by the Canada Lands Company at Mirabel?

Hon. Ray Hnatyshyn (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Solicitor General I would like to acknowledge the question of the Hon. Member who has in his possession a copy, certified, I suppose, of the proceedings in a court. I understand that the matter is before the court so I do not want to comment with respect to that matter. As the Hon. Member's Leader has said, I would not want to prejudice the case by making any comment either in or outside the House.

The RCMP has also indicated that it is involved in an investigation with respect to the matter. Therefore, using the exact words of the Hon. Member's Leader, I would like to caution the Hon. Member about raising the details of the matter and trying to do anything that might jeopardize any investigation that is taking place.

Mr. Boudria: Mr. Speaker, it appears now that the Minister is confirming that there is an RCMP investigation and that is something we had not yet been told officially.

[Translation]

MIRABEL—INQUIRY WHAT GOVERNMENT INTENDS TO DO TO REDRESS SITUATION

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): My supplementary question also deals with the Canada Lands Company at Mirabel. I have in hand another document which is a promise or a bid to purchase signed by 2434-3972 Québec Inc. and Mr. Gérard Poirier in which Mr. Poirier states that pressures were exerted on him and that as a condition he was required to keep his bid to that numbered and secret company for quite a long time. Considering that not more than two months ago, the media were referring to another transaction which could be considered as fishy, and involving, I think, the Canada Lands Company at Mirabel, what does the Deputy Prime Minister intend to do to put an end to that kind of scandal which is a scourge for his Government? What is he going to do to redress such an inequitable situation?

● (1450)

[English]

Hon. Ray Hnatyshyn (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, possibly the Hon. Member would like to read *Hansard* of November 30, 1984, where his Leader, at page 771, talked about:

—reinstating the practice that used to apply in this House, and I believe still should, reflecting the principle of presumption of innocence until proven guilty?

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): You have already admitted there is an investigation.