

Oral Questions

position of the Liberal Party, let it say so honestly and directly to the people of western Canada.

The Hon. Member is incorrect when he suggests there has been a tripling of the costs of these vehicles. The average cost of the vehicles purchased by the Department of National Defence was \$140,000 in 1984 dollars. The vehicles we are contracting for now in 1988-89 dollars are about \$170,000 a piece. The difference is the difference in the exchange rates and the inflation during that period.

This is a very good deal for the taxpayers of Canada. It is exceptionally good for the militia of Canada who have been neglected for so long and will finally be getting the equipment they need to do their job of serving the people of Canada.

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NATIONAL PAROLE BOARD

APPOINTMENT OF MINISTER'S FORMER EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Solicitor General. Since 1984 the Conservative Government has been packing the National Parole Board with faithful Tory supporters, including former Tory MPs and former constituency assistants to Tory MPs. Now, however, the ultimate has happened. The Solicitor General has appointed his own executive assistant, Nancy Stableforth, to the board.

How can the Minister possibly justify this blatant pork-barrelling appointment of his own executive assistant to the National Parole Board?

Hon. James Kelleher (Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, one of the things this Government has been trying to do since it came to power is to raise the quality of the appointments.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Kelleher: I notice there is no criticism of the qualifications of this particular individual who had a very distinguished career as a lawyer in private practice. She has served the Public Service well, and I do not think a person should be disqualified for having worked for this particular Minister.

● (1500)

REQUEST THAT APPOINTMENT BE RESCINDED

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are becoming—

Mr. McDermid: Whom would you appoint?

Mr. Crosbie: What about Stephen, your little buddy? He was okay. What about the other guy who went to Ireland? He was all right. What was his name?

Mr. Mazankowski: Dennis McDermott.

Mr. Speaker: The Hon. Member for Burnaby has the floor.

Mr. Robinson: Mr. Speaker, it is not surprising that they are a little sensitive over there about this appointment.

Canadians are becoming increasingly fed up with the failure of our parole system and with the National Parole Board in particular. Given the appalling record of Tory patronage appointments to the Board and the public's loss of confidence in the parole system, will the Minister rescind immediately the appointment of his former executive assistant and faithful supporter, Nancy Stableforth, and bring in a new appointment process for the Parole Board, one that operates on the basis of merit and ability, not on faithful service to the Conservative Party of Canada?

Hon. James Kelleher (Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I think that this Government has an excellent record of appointing people from all political Parties and all sectors of the Government as well as the private sector. If the Hon. Member has some problem or question with respect to the qualifications of this individual, instead of smearing people such as this in public he should come forward to tell me what is wrong with the qualifications of this particular person.

Mr. Riis: Absolutely no experience!

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TRADE

CANADA-UNITED STATES FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

Mr. Alan Redway (York East): Mr. Speaker, when I speak to senior citizens in my riding they ask me if the free trade agreement is going to affect their pensions, whether it will affect their medicare, and whether it will affect our water.

Some Hon. Members: Yes!

Mr. Redway: I tell them absolutely not.

Mr. Harris: Is this a question?

Ms. Copps: What are you asking a question for if you already know the answer?

Mr. Speaker: The Hon. Member will put his question, please.

Mr. Redway: Mr. Speaker, I was pleased today to hear that Liberal Senator van Roggen agrees with me. When the senior citizens in my riding pick up a Toronto newspaper day after day they see that all of these things are going to be wiped out.

I want to ask the Minister for International Trade—

Mr. Riis: He hasn't read it yet.