

Oral Questions

When will we see some action on the way the marketplace has left many Canadians jobless and homeless, never mind without a view? When are we going to see action on the way free enterprise developers, in their unmitigated search for profits, have damaged the water, air, forest, and wildlife which constitute the common heritage of all Canadians and not just the private property of one person? Maybe for example, if the Norman Wells pipeline were going through the Prime Minister's background, it would be a different story.

When Canadians see the Prime Minister as concerned about these and other issues, they will be more inclined to sympathize with the plight of poor Pierre, who is having his overview of the Liberal kingdom of Montreal obscured. Until then, we can only see the fact that the Prime Minister is reported to have hired as his lawyer, Peter Blaikie, the past president of the Tories and prospective leadership contender, as the latest manifestation of the Liberal-Tory coalition in Canada, an alliance of names which I personally find unfortunate.

Madam Speaker: Order.

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[Translation]

TRADE

UNITED STATES DECISION ON CANADIAN LUMBER EXPORTS

Mrs. Eva Côté (Rimouski-Témiscouata): Madam Speaker, yesterday, the United States Department of Commerce published a preliminary decision according to which the subsidies provided under certain programs to Canadian producers of lumber, shingles and fencing are judged to be negligible. As a result, no countervailing duty will be levied on Canadian exports to the United States. Madam Speaker, perhaps I may be allowed to offer our congratulations and sincere thanks to the industry and the federal and provincial agencies concerned for their joint efforts to convince the United States Department of Commerce that stumpage rights should not be considered a form of subsidy.

As you know, I represent a riding that has over ten sawmills, and a large part of their production is sold to our American neighbours. I would urge the Minister responsible for External Trade to continue his excellent work for the next round on May 23, when industrial assistance programs such as DREE projects and certain subsidy and loan programs will be examined by the United States Department of Commerce. In my riding of Rimouski-Témiscouata, Madam Speaker, the lumber industry alone provides thousands of jobs in the mills and in the bush.

• (1415)

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

THE ADMINISTRATION

CONFLICT OF INTEREST GUIDELINES

Hon. Perrin Beatty (Wellington-Dufferin-Simcoe): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Acting Prime Minister. Yesterday, when the Prime Minister confirmed that he was considering a review of the conflict of interest guidelines, he made it clear that he was distressed about the way in which they were interpreted. In view of the fact that the Government's concern seems to be more about the public relations aspects of the guidelines than about their substance or the behaviour of Government officials, how can Canadians be expected to have any confidence in this review?

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State for External Affairs): Madam Speaker, I do not think the Hon. Member's premise to the question is correct. I do not see how he could conclude that the Government is not concerned about these guidelines. After all, the guidelines have been produced as a result of the initiative of the Prime Minister. They have been circulated, and the Prime Minister said yesterday that he was presently reflecting upon whether there is any possibility of improving these guidelines.

Mr. Beatty: Madam Speaker, the Liberals' idea of improving these guidelines is to water them down so that, if the Gillespie affair were to happen again, there would be no sanctions against officials; it would simply be a matter that no allegations could be made that the guidelines were breached.

REQUEST FOR COMMITTEE REVIEW

Hon. Perrin Beatty (Wellington-Dufferin-Simcoe): Madam Speaker, why will the Acting Prime Minister not agree that the only way to deal with an instance like this is to agree to have a parliamentary review by a parliamentary Committee of the guidelines, to ensure that they are meaningful and that they have some teeth to them?

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State for External Affairs): Madam Speaker, I think we have seen the political atmosphere which has developed around these guidelines, and I doubt whether sending the guidelines to a parliamentary Committee would change or improve that political atmosphere. I doubt whether they would be considered with the objectivity which is required at the present time.

Mr. Beatty: If a Liberal were caught trying to burn down the Parliament Buildings, the Government would legalize arson.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!