

NATIONAL PAROLE BOARD

REPORTED INTERVENTION BY MEMBER FOR JOLIETTE

Mr. John Nunziata (York South—Weston): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister. Yesterday the Solicitor General said that no one should ever be in any position to influence in any way any Parole Board hearing. In view of the fact that the Conservative Member for Joliette has intervened in the case of Conrad Bouchard, can the Minister indicate whether he considers the intervention on behalf of the Hon. Member to have been appropriate in the circumstances?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, we have here another allegation. I think the Hon. Solicitor General responded to that question quite fully yesterday. Perhaps the Hon. Member might want to reread the answer.

MEMBER'S REPORTED ACTION

Mr. John Nunziata (York South—Weston): Mr. Speaker, it is not an allegation. The Hon. Member for Joliette admitted today that he intervened on behalf of Conrad Bouchard. I put my question again to the Deputy Prime Minister. Does he consider the Hon. Member's action to be appropriate in the circumstances? Will he indicate today whether any other Member of Parliament intervened in the Conrad Bouchard case?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, such allegations flowing from the lips of the Hon. Member would have to be checked, double-checked, and probably triple-checked before any action was taken.

* * *

CANADIAN WHEAT BOARD

PRESS REPORTS OF FUTURE APPOINTMENT

Mr. Stan J. Hovdebo (Prince Albert): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister. Yesterday the U.S. indicated that the Canadian Wheat Board should be placed on the free trade negotiating table. Today we learned that the Hon. Member for Lisgar is being considered to fill the vacant position on the Canadian Wheat Board. With the present threats to Canada's international markets and the increased need for a strong orderly marketing structure, why is the Government considering making a political appointment of a Member who has in the past been hostile to the Wheat Board and who lacks the necessary expertise to be successful in such a position?

Hon. Charles Mayer (Minister of State (Canadian Wheat Board)): Mr. Speaker, I think this is a classical case of members of the press picking up their own stories and then augmenting them and running with them. This is a story that

Oral Questions

has been out in the farm press for a month, or maybe six weeks. It seems to me that what we have here is the press sitting around having a discussion, and what they do not understand they attempt to explain to each other. There is absolutely no truth to the rumour whatsoever.

FILLING OF VACANCY

Mr. Stan J. Hovdebo (Prince Albert): Mr. Speaker, we would very much like a clarification of that.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Hovdebo: Since the Hon. Member for Lisgar has advocated a grain exchange type of marketing system and has called for the closing of Churchill, will the Minister assure us that he, or a person of that type, will not be appointed to fill the vacant position of commissioner of the Wheat Board?

Hon. Charles Mayer (Minister of State (Canadian Wheat Board)): Mr. Speaker, what I would like to do publicly with regard to some of the Americans' comments on the Canadian Wheat Board is to make an offer to the Americans saying that we would be prepared to start selling some of their wheat. Through the Canadian Wheat Board we have been doing a much better job of selling wheat. It seems to me that both the Americans and Canada would be much better off if they would accept our offer to sell some of their wheat on commission. We would be much better.

Let me say that when we make an appointment to the Wheat Board we will make an appointment that will be in the best over-all interests of the western Canadian farmer who very much depends on this very well run institution.

TIMING OF APPOINTMENT TO FILL VACANCY

Mr. Maurice Foster (Algoma): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of State for the Canadian Wheat Board. Will he indicate when he will make an appointment to the Canadian Wheat Board? The position of commissioner has been vacant for some 14 months now. Canadian western agriculture is in the worst crisis since the 1930s with the lowest prices in 50 years. When will the Minister make an appointment? Can he assure the House that he will not weaken the Board by making a political appointment but that he will appoint a qualified person to sit on the Wheat Board?

Hon. Charles Mayer (Minister of State (Canadian Wheat Board)): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member should know that the Canadian Wheat Board Act calls for a minimum of three commissioners and a maximum of five. Dr. Jim Leibfried resigned a year ago last December, so the Board has been running with four commissioners, which is entirely consistent with the Act.

I might say that in a very difficult world market it has been doing an extremely good job of selling. As I have said before, and I say again, we increased our market share last year and have the prospects of increasing our market share again this