

Oral Questions

was given a job at the parole board's Ottawa headquarters evaluating the work of other board members.

Will the minister acknowledge to this House that problems with the National Parole Board go beyond just one or two isolated incidents and that the entire parole system must be re-examined?

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member has indicated a number of concerns that arose before this government took office.

We are committed to working to improve and strengthen the parole and correction system. I have already said that I, on behalf of the government, intend to bring down legislation before too long to achieve this purpose. I look forward to the support and encouragement of the hon. member to achieve these objectives.

Ms. Val Meredith (Surrey—White Rock—South Langley): Mr. Speaker, I am encouraged by the words, but this government has frequently congratulated itself for having the courage to cancel multi-billion dollar helicopter deals and Pearson airport deals to save taxpayers money.

Why does the Prime Minister find it so difficult to cancel some \$100,000 governor in council appointments that may save taxpayers' lives?

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, this Parliament has created the National Parole Board as an independent semi-judicial body, akin to a court.

• (1450)

I think it is a very serious matter and has to be proceeded with due care and attention if one is considering revoking an appointment. I do not think the hon. member would want to create a set up where there is political interference or the possibility of accusations of political interference in the decisions of the parole board.

As a result, I take the hon. member's point very seriously. We are looking into the concerns underlying her question. Certainly we will not shrink back from taking action that is justified by a serious consideration of all the facts.

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TRADE

Mr. David Iftody (Provencher): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the minister of agriculture.

The Americans are falsely accusing Canadian wheat farmers of dumping their product into U.S. markets and the U.S. has mounted trade sanction attacks against us.

Can the minister advise this House where Canada stands? Will the minister defend the legitimate rights of our Canadian grain producers?

Hon. Ralph E. Goodale (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food): Mr. Speaker, the short answer to the hon. member's question is an unequivocal yes.

As I have said on many occasions, we will not roll over and play dead. Canada will defend this country's vital interests, including those of Canadian grain producers. I have made that point on a number of occasions, as has the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister, the Minister of Finance, the Minister for International Trade, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

We want a negotiated settlement with the United States. We are prepared to negotiate fairly and in good faith for as long as it takes to get such an agreement. In the meantime we have made it absolutely clear that unilateral trade action by the United States against Canada will be met with vigorous and determined response by Canada.

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[Translation]

CUSTOMS TARIFFS

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Verchères): Mr. Speaker, after the question asked by my hon. colleague, this one will probably be a little tougher.

In announcing its intention to raise its tariffs on Canadian durum wheat and barley, the United States apparently wants to import less Canadian grain and, in turn, to challenge under the NAFTA provisions the maintenance of the GATT-defined tariffs that Canada intends to impose on products subject to quotas such as poultry, eggs and milk, where Quebec accounts for over 40 per cent of Canadian production.

My question is for the Minister for International Trade. Can the minister state in this House that the government does not intend to cave in to American pressure on tariffs and that it will not strike any kind of bargain with the various agricultural sectors in order to facilitate negotiations with the U.S. on exports of durum wheat and barley?

[English]

Hon. Roy MacLaren (Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, we are not linking products in our discussions with the United States. We are not linking questions pertaining to the tariffication of dairy and poultry quotas with those of grain. We are not linking the rights of Canadian grain farmers to other issues. We are dealing with both issues quite separately.

[Translation]

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Verchères): Mr. Speaker, can the minister tell this House which provisions will prevail in trade disputes between Canada and the U.S., that is whether or not