

answer was no. Nevertheless those who approached me in Saskatchewan then arranged for the president of the federal Liberal Party to call me. Once again my answer was no. They also asked the federal Energy Minister to approach me. Once again my answer was no.

For the enlightenment of the Liberals, and anyone else who cares, I am a New Democrat now, and I am proud to say I will continue to be a New Democrat. I did not initiate any approach to the Liberal Party, and never will. However, the Liberals should not be discouraged from trying in Saskatchewan. Just last month two prominent Conservative executive members and a Conservative MLA announced they were joining the Liberal Party.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

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AGRICULTURE

APPEAL FOR IMPOSITION OF COUNTERVAILING DUTY ON BEEF IMPORTS

Mr. Lee Clark (Brandon-Souris): Mr. Speaker, cattle production is no longer the healthy, going concern it once was in Canada, and the Government has a duty to help the industry get back on its feet. Cattle producers' share of the consumer dollar is shrinking, farm bankruptcies are increasing, and there have been numerous meat packing plant closures in recent years. Last week Burns Meats of Brandon, Manitoba, became another casualty in a badly ailing industry.

While some factors in the livestock industry are difficult to control, there are steps which the Government could and should take. For example, Canada must offset the trade advantage now enjoyed by subsidized Irish and Danish beef exports into this country. One cannot overstate the potentially devastating impact of these imports on the Canadian cattle industry. In addition, Canada's good trading relationship with the United States is being threatened by the sudden invasion of Canadian beef into its market, beef we can no longer sell domestically. The solution is to introduce a countervailing duty on subsidized Irish and Danish beef imports. Until this occurs, Canada should impose an interim surtax.

Yesterday in this House the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Whelan) was asked whether he would support these measures. He chose to sidestep both the issue and his ministerial duties by offering absolutely no hint of how, or even if, he intends to take some kind of action. I appeal to the Government to introduce appropriate measures now, before the damage done to Canada's once thriving beef industry is irreversible.

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker: The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (Mr. Gingras).

[English]

Mr. Hnatyshyn: Order! He is a Parliamentary Secretary.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

FINANCE

STATEMENT BY QUEBEC'S MINISTER OF FINANCE ON TRANSFER PAYMENTS

Mr. René Gingras (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Mr. Speaker, today I would like to say a few words about the system of equalization payments in Canada.

When a senior citizen comes to my office to talk about a guaranteed income supplement that was cut off because last year his income increased, he usually leaves my office quite satisfied with the explanation he receives. However, when I hear a Quebec Minister of Finance like Jacques Parizeau, supposedly an economist, explain the system of equalization payments in Canada, I am absolutely flabbergasted. Just what is his understanding of the system? Is he an economist or is he terribly inconsistent? He asks for and accepts assistance when Quebec is in trouble and refuses to help the other provinces when Quebec's situation improves. His own figures prove that he has benefited quite considerably through equalization in recent years. And now he refuses to admit that the federal Government and the seventy-four Members from Quebec have anything to do with the improved situation in Quebec. As usual, in line with his separatist philosophy, he takes the credit for positive developments and blames us when things go wrong.

Mr. Speaker, this is definitely a no-win situation for us, and I have therefore decided to let Quebec voters draw their own conclusions at the next elections. My constituents are well aware what my Government has done during the recession in Abitibi, compared to which the Parti Québécois's contribution was peanuts. They will realize—

Mr. Speaker: I am sorry to interrupt the Parliamentary Secretary, but his time has expired.

[English]

With respect to the interjection at the beginning concerning whether or not Parliamentary Secretaries can make Standing Order 21 declarations the rules are quite clear, yes. Questions are another matter, but under Standing Order 21 Madam Speaker Sauvé was most explicit that this should be permitted.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

POOLS

CANADA SPORTS POOL CORPORATION—ALLEGATIONS CONCERNING STAFFING APPOINTMENTS

Hon. Bill Jarvis (Perth): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of State for Fitness and Amateur