

Oral Questions

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): This is a letter. The Minister of Transport has now had over 24 hours to investigate it, and he has not given us an answer.

This letter is dated July 7, 1989 from Brian Gallery who was then the acting vice-chairman of Canadian National Railway, to Grant Ducey, who is vice-president of public affairs and advertising. He complains that *Seaports*, Mr. Gallery's magazine, has lost a contract from Canadian National.

Here are some of the words he uses to Mr. Ducey who is an employee of the company:

As you are aware, CN is actively asking to recapture Cast's business. Klaus Glusing, the President, is a personal friend of mine and of "Seaports" and has been one of our strongest supporters for many years.

CN is also seeking to obtain the Maersk business. Barry Olsen, the President, is a long-time friend of mine and supporter of "Seaports" as well.

Does the Prime Minister agree with these implied threats directed by a senior member of the board of CN, appointed by the Prime Minister, to an employee of the railway suggesting that he had better restore that advertising or else?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the minister indicated yesterday that the chairman of the board of the CNR is in the process of assembling all the relevant data in an objective and, I suppose, on a very fair-minded basis.

Surely nothing untoward will happen between now and the time that Mr. Smith reports.

This is not a matter of life or death. We can wait for the appropriate time for Mr. Smith to assemble the information.

Concerning whatever is in the letter which I have not read, surely my right hon. friend would not want to judge Mr. Gallery or anyone else in a preemptory and unfair manner. The request has gone to the chairman of the board of the CNR. He will assemble the data. He will make a value judgment and make a report to the minister of the Crown.

Surely that is in keeping with the traditions of this House.

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I am doing nothing but reading from Mr. Gallery's letter. Mr. Gallery was an Order in Council appointee at the direction, presumably, of the Prime

Minister. Mr. Gallery is also involved in political activities for the Conservative Party. That is fine.

I am saying to the Prime Minister that he is responsible for conflict of interest guidelines. He has said on several occasions in this House that he takes personal responsibility for them. He does not need much investigation here. We have already given the government 24 hours notice on this issue.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, surely the Leader of the Liberal Party of Canada is not suggesting that appointment by Order in Council of someone associated with the Liberal Party in the future ought to be precluded from public service.

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): No, I am not saying that.

Mr. Mulroney: If the right hon. gentleman is not saying that, then he should not by implication impugn the integrity of Mr. Gallery without a verdict having been arrived at.

There is nothing unreasonable that has taken place in the procedure. It is an appropriate procedure. The minister, upon being apprised of this, asked the chairman of the board to get the necessary facts and to make a recommendation to the minister.

We too are subject to the conflict of interest guidelines that apply to public servants and to the various Crown corporations. I am not suggesting that anyone is immune from them in the least. Indeed the new legislation before the House will apply to all members of the Opposition as well. I look forward to its implementation.

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AGRICULTURE

Mr. Vic Althouse (Mackenzie): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Agriculture who has just told my Leader that what the country's farmers need is an international agreement.

That was the same message that was told to farmers several years ago prior to the signing of the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement in which Article 701 was supposed to make certain that the U.S. did not subsidize sales into our markets. We made a similar commitment as well. Yet since that signing the U.S. has increased its