

Interim Supply

capable of seeing that a great Canadian asset is preserved in that way, or at least not disturbing the situation. What is my hon. friend's other question? Let us have them all.

Mr. Hamilton (York West): You have answered them.

Mr. Knowles: May I ask the minister—

Mr. Howe (Port Arthur): You made your speech this morning.

Mr. Nicholson: You did not answer.

Mr. Howe (Port Arthur): Why should I?

Mr. Knowles: Because I happen to be a member of parliament.

Mr. Howe (Port Arthur): That is perhaps the only vestige of a reason. My hon. friend has been pouring out insinuations and his sidekick there has been trying to get information for brokers in Winnipeg. You have been trying to put out rumours that will affect the market, and I am not interested; that is all.

Mr. Macdonnell: Keep your head.

Mr. Howe (Port Arthur): Ask any questions you like; you will get no answer from me.

Mr. Knowles: Mr. Chairman, may I thank the minister for his permission to ask him some questions? The minister questioned whether it was any business of the hon. member for York West as to whether Mr. Barrington is a director of McIntyre Porcupine. May I ask him whether it is not part of our business as members of parliament to ask questions about a full-time salaried head of a crown corporation. Is it not our business to know of the outside business activities of such a person?

Mr. Howe (Port Arthur): It is the business of a certain type of mind; but I might point out there is no law of the land that interferes with Mr. Barrington being a director of any corporation he likes. However I may say that I am going to discuss it with him, and what his future action will be will depend on the nature of our discussion. However my hon. friend can ask questions and throw in insinuations. If he can show that anyone has violated the law of the land in connection with Mr. Barrington's appointment let him go to it.

Mr. Knowles: Mr. Chairman, if the minister would like it I can show him that in the Civil Service Act there is a provision which prohibits any deputy head of a department engaging in any outside employment, and I would suggest that the head of a crown corporation has a status that is similar to that of a deputy head.

[Mr. Howe (Port Arthur).]

Mr. McCann: No.

Mr. Knowles: I am not trying to say that the Civil Service Act by statute prohibits it. The statute does prohibit people in comparable position; the statute does prohibit it in the case of Mr. Gordon, the president of the Canadian National Railways, and I suggest on the same basis that a person who is the head of a crown corporation like Polymer should not be engaging in such outside business activities. And I suggest—although the minister may use the word "insinuation" as often as he wants to—that it is our right as members of parliament to ask questions about the outside business activities of the heads of crown corporations.

May I ask the minister another question? I realize I cannot claim an answer but at least he has given me his kind permission to ask the question. When he said that he had not interfered in any way with the management of Algoma Steel, was that based on any statement to that effect that has been made by me today or by the member for York West? Did either of us say that the minister had interfered in the management of Algoma Steel? Did we not base our remarks on the fact that the minister has certain duties as an executor of the Dunn estate?

Has he not admitted that he has tried to carry out his duties as an executor of the Dunn estate? Is it not true that when I referred to this company this morning, and on a previous day, I spoke of the minister's duties as an executor of the Dunn estate? I did not say he was interfering in the management of Algoma Steel, but I did say that his duties as an executor of the Dunn estate conflict, in my view, with his duties as a minister of the crown.

The minister has admitted today that he has carried out those duties. He has said that he is not yet in a position to make an announcement, but I presume that when the shares in the Dunn estate are disposed of that he, either by himself or in company with his fellow executors, will announce to whom those shares have been sold. I suggest that when there are shares to the number that there are in the Dunn estate—the press reports say there are 700,000 shares in Algoma Steel—the disposition of shares of that volume worth \$90 million more or less at today's market price is something that is a factor in the Canadian economy and that we as members of parliament—even I as the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre, despite the remarks the minister is making—have a right to know what the minister is doing with respect to these matters. He cannot divide himself in two and