

Oral Questions

from Hamilton Mountain, and it applied to all Members of the House of Commons.

Mr. Nunziata: We're not all Ministers.

Mr. Mulroney: The Hon. Member for York South-Weston was in agreement with the general thrust of the comment.

Ms. Copps: He was not.

Mr. Hnatyshyn: Let him speak for himself.

Mr. Mulroney: I think that my hon. friend should take the cautionary reference made by the Hon. Member for York South-Weston, as all Members of the House will, in regard to comments made by those involved in a quasi-judicial process. I agreed yesterday with my friend from Hamilton Mountain. His comment was appropriate, and I expect that all Members of the House will follow it in their future conduct.

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CORPORATE AFFAIRS

WATER EXPORT COMPANY—PRIME MINISTERS' OFFER OF CO-OPERATION

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Prime Minister and it concerns a report in today's *Montreal Gazette* with which I am sure the Prime Minister is familiar. The report concerns a civil action that is being brought against a company established to export water from the Prime Minister's constituency to the Middle East.

My question concerns the support the Prime Minister allegedly gave to this company. Quite specifically, I would like to ask the Prime Minister if he could tell the House what he meant when he told the company president, in a letter under the Prime Ministerial imprimatur, that he would offer "every co-operation to assist" the company after he had looked into what he described as the "corporate initiatives" being taken by the company.

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the letter to which the Hon. Member refers offers every co-operation to establish productive jobs in the constituency of Manicouagan.

[*Translation*]

And that is perfectly normal. I was approached by the Mayor of Seven Islands in my capacity as Member for Manicouagan. The mayor had a letter of approval from the Government of Quebec and plans for a project that would create about 50 jobs on the North Shore. I thought it was perfectly normal that I, as the Member for the riding, should support a job creation project, which I did, and I believe any other Member of this House would have done the same in similar circumstances.

[*English*]

ROLE OF PRIME MINISTER

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Mr. Speaker, no one is questioning the obligation of Members of Parliament, on whichever side of the House, to take action to support the location of jobs in their constituencies. The question pertains to something other than that. First, all Members of Parliament are not the Prime Minister. It is the Prime Minister who can request the Secretary of State for External Affairs to take related action in terms of his responsibilities. Members of Parliament, as opposed to Ministers of the Crown, cannot do those things.

My question in this regard would pertain to members of the Ministry as well as other Members. Does the Prime Minister think it is appropriate that he, as Prime Minister, lent his support to a highly speculative economic venture, in a letter that was subsequently used to get other investors to take part in the project, a project that is now involved in a civil suit?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, my information is that, prior to coming to see me, the other investors had been approached and were involved. I can only tell my hon. friend the facts. I was approached by the Mayor of Seven Islands—

● (1430)

[*Translation*]

—who came to see me with a person who had already received the support of the Quebec Government in the form of a letter signed by the Deputy Prime Minister of Quebec, the Hon. Bernard Landry. I looked into the project and talked about it with the mayor who had discussed it with the municipal council of Seven Islands. Water was available from the municipality of Seven Islands. I therefore wrote the following in English, at the mayor's request, and I quote:

[*English*]

—I wish to extend to you and your colleagues every co-operation to assist, if possible, in bringing productive employment to the area.

I was advised that some 50 or 55 jobs could result. I thought it was an appropriate way to be helpful to the Mayor of Seven Islands in trying to bring the jobs to my area.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

PRIME MINISTER'S LETTER

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Mr. Speaker, I repeat that the letter which was sent by the Prime Minister states categorically that he looked into the project. In the letter he said that he had a look at their corporate initiatives, which suggests that in some sense he did some background work on the project. Then he wrote to the president of the company with a fulsome endorsement of the project. The letter was subsequently used by the president to get other people to invest.