

Routine Proceedings

tant elements in the report of the expert advisory committee on the safety of Canada's blood supply system were leaked to and disclosed by the media.

How can the minister explain to us, as mentioned in the report of the expert committee, the blatant lack of rigour in Health Canada's Bureau of Biologics, which has the huge responsibility of checking the quality of blood products and facilities at all 17 transfusion centres of the Canadian Red Cross Society?

Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as you can appreciate, this is a very sensitive subject. This report is in the hands of the Krever Commission. I will not comment on this until the commission has held public hearings on this issue.

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[English]

CANADIAN WHEAT BOARD

Mr. Leon E. Benoit (Vegreville, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, on Friday the results of the Canadian Wheat Board advisory elections were made public. It is not a surprise that less than 40 per cent of farmers turned out to vote for these largely symbolic positions. It is a surprise that leading up to this election Lorne Hehn, the chief commissioner for the Canadian Wheat Board, campaigned actively for a group of candidates who had a specific political agenda.

Does the minister of agriculture condone the fact that the chief commissioner who is supposed to be politically neutral campaigned actively during the advisory committee elections?

Hon. Ralph E. Goodale (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, to the best of my knowledge the chief commissioner and a number of the commissioners of the Canadian Wheat Board participated in public meetings during the fall. They discussed a broad variety of aspects pertaining to the marketing of western Canadian grain. To the best of my knowledge they were not actively involved in any campaign with respect to the election of the advisory committee to the Canadian Wheat Board. If the hon. member has any information to the contrary I would be happy to have it.

Mr. Vic Althouse (Mackenzie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the same minister who has had a chance now to analyse the results of that same advisory committee election which demonstrated overwhelming support for pro-wheat board candidates.

• (1500)

Since the sole support for dual marketing and the subsequent weakening of the board's powers is clearly seen to be limited to a small minority special interest group, what action will he take to protect and reinforce the ability of the board to act in the best interests of the vast majority of producers who support the board?

Hon. Ralph E. Goodale (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have already indicated on a number of occasions that I will be providing the opportunity this winter for farmers to become engaged in a discussion about the marketing systems that they regard to be most appropriate and in their interest.

In the course of that kind of objective, reasonable, rationale dialogue, the respective merits of certain marketing systems will become obvious. I would imagine under the close scrutiny that public dialogue and examination gives, the Canadian Wheat Board will be able to demonstrate its merits very effectively.

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TRADE

Mrs. Dianne Brushett (Cumberland—Colchester, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Secretary of State for Agriculture and Agri-Food, Fisheries and Oceans.

The Prime Minister's recent trip to China secured trade opportunities and created wealth for our country. On the heels of this success, can the secretary of state tell the House what is being done and what will be done to promote Canada's fishing products in the far east?

[Translation]

Hon. Fernand Robichaud (Secretary of State (Agriculture and Agri-Food, Fisheries and Oceans), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my colleague was certainly inspired by the Holy Spirit, since her question is quite timely.

[English]

I will have the honour of leading a Canadian delegation to China for the first ever China Fish Processing Expo on December 10-15.

Nineteen executives, representing 11 Canadian companies, will be participating in an attempt to forge closer links with the Chinese fishing industry and also explore business opportunities.

Furthermore, of 15 booths made available to participants outside China, 10 have been reserved for Canadian companies at that Expo. It goes without saying that Canadian participation is in keeping with the new spirit of closer ties between China—

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[Translation]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to certain petitions.