

substantial natural gas field which of course would be of particular value to Prince Edward Island.

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COMMUNICATIONS

CABLEVISION—ALLEGED INTERFERENCE OF MINISTER OF REGIONAL ECONOMIC EXPANSION IN APPLICATION IN NEWFOUNDLAND

Mr. J. P. Nowlan (Annapolis Valley): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the President of the Privy Council. In view of the recent charges of the Hon. Joseph Smallwood, a member of the Privy Council, and of cable television applicants, of political interference of the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion to delay the development of CBC facilities in Newfoundland and to block a cable television application, would the government House leader consult with the Minister of Communications and the Secretary to State in order to clear the air and remove any suspicion by having this matter referred forthwith to the appropriate committee so that rumour can be resolved with fact and allegation and answer supported by evidence.

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, I do not know how much substance to give the allegations made by the hon. member, but I will look into the question to see if anything needs to be done. I have great confidence in my colleague the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion, and I am sure he would never act in conflict with his public duty.

Mr. Nowlan: Mr. Speaker, my supplementary is directed to the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion who I tried to reach by phone twice yesterday. I should like to ask the minister, in his ministerial duties as minister in charge of DREE through which he has contractual relationships with the Newfoundland Broadcasting Corporation of which he is a major shareholder and of which his brother is a major shareholder, if he himself would not like this matter forthwith presented before a standing committee of the House so that all these matters can be cleared up once and for all.

Hon. Donald C. Jamieson (Minister of Regional Economic Expansion): Mr. Speaker, if I am permitted to answer the question, the answer is an unequivocal yes. I am fed up with allegations. I have said categorically in this House and elsewhere that there is not a syllable of truth in it. I am sorry the hon. member was not able to contact me yesterday because I would have been glad to give him all the data which indicates that I have disposed of those shares, except for the action of the CRTC, since December of last year.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

An hon. Member: Withdraw.

Mr. Nowlan: There is no question about withdrawing. Mr. Speaker, this is not a supplementary but rather a point of privilege. I did try to get the minister yesterday. In regard to the disposition—and this is the disappointment because this matter came up two years ago at which time

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through an exchange on the floor of the House we had been assured there had been a disposition into the blind trust of shares owned by the minister and yet in checking the CRTC records not only of two years ago, or last year, but right at the present time I find there has been no effective disposition whatsoever of those shares under any sort of blind trust pursuant to section 19 of the Broadcasting Act. There has been no hearing by the CRTC, so the statement of the minister in this situation confuses the issue and compounds the rumour—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. It seems to me that the hon. member began perhaps by seeking information on the subject and is finishing by coming very close to making specific charges against the minister about proprieties and, in addition, is now, in his latter remarks, coming very close to making a specific charge that the minister is misleading the House, whether it be deliberate or otherwise. In both instances, surely the question period ought not be the place for that unless under the usual circumstances the hon. member is prepared to name the minister or any other minister in a specific charge with the usual consequences on both sides.

Mr. Nowlan: Mr. Speaker, you have taken this thing several steps further. The minister said he had an unequivocal disposition to have this matter referred to the committee, but in the latter part of his answer he made a few statements which are not supported by the record. I suggest, and say in this House, there has been no effective disposition of the ownership or control of the shares in the name of the minister.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. In view of the clear understanding that the purpose of the question was to see whether or not the matter would be aired in the committee, it seems to me with the greatest respect that the details with which the hon. member is now dealing ought to be exactly the kind of thing that is dealt with in a more specific way in the committee.

Mr. Jamieson: Mr. Speaker, may I be permitted a question of privilege. At this stage of the proceedings I do not wish to hold up the question period. I assure the hon. member that I did not try to deceive him. What I said was that disposition had been made as of last December but that the CRTC had not held the hearing. The hon. member knows that kind of process must be undertaken. It is one over which I have no control whatsoever. When the CRTC decides to hear it, presumably it will dispose of it.

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● (1150)

[Translation]

AGRICULTURE

MILK SUBSIDY—POSITION OF PROVINCES ON ELIMINATION

Mr. Adrien Lambert (Bellechasse): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of Agriculture, I shall address my question to the right hon. Prime Minister.

In view of contradictory press reports on the elimination of the raw milk subsidy, can he tell the House wheth-