

Anti-Dumping Tribunal

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): As I said, Mr. Speaker, the strict application of these to tribunals has currently been a matter of some discussion between tribunals in general and the Privy Council office. My understanding is that the matter has not come to a conclusion, and it is for that reason there is no definitive position on it at this point.

Mr. Stevens: Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is again to the minister, who has indicated he is satisfied there is no conflict of interest involved in the chairman's activities. To become satisfied, would the minister indicate whether, for example, he reviewed the possible Swedish steel dumping cases which have been before the Anti-Dumping Tribunal for some time? If he did review these, how did he satisfy himself that in fact there was no conflict of interest involved, bearing in mind the involvement the chairman appears to have had with various Swedish business concerns, or at least in one instance a connection with the steel business; and did he specifically invite the steel representatives to indicate if they were satisfied with the tribunal's decision in respect of that matter?

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): Mr. Speaker, I have certainly reviewed some of the correspondence in this regard, and I would remind the hon. gentleman that the result of the tribunal's decision was a substantial withdrawal of Swedish steel from Canadian markets. Indeed, Atlas Steel indicated its satisfaction with the outcome of this matter. There was no indication in either the material made available, or as a result of questioning, of any connection between the persons involved and Mr. Gauthier's individual dealings or the principals or officers of the Swedish steel company.

● (1530)

Mr. MacKay: Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask the minister three brief questions. Is the matter entirely closed at this point, or is the minister still making some inquiries? Second, will the hon. gentleman, make any recommendations to his cabinet colleagues for any modification or some of the existing guidelines for public servants? Third, had any previous investigation taken place in respect of any aspect of Mr. Gauthier's activities as alleged by CTV?

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): Mr. Speaker, with regard to Mr. Bissonnette, as the hon. member will note, I have indicated my wish that he should take further action with regard to his position as either a director or officer of certain private companies. The matter, therefore, is not closed. It is a matter which, obviously, I will have to pursue.

With regard to Mr. Gauthier it seems to me the matter is closed. I also made inquiries, in respect of the point of the hon. member for York-Simcoe, concerning whether any charges were made to the tribunal in respect of the travels of Mr. Gauthier or the use of the tribunal's facilities. I do not have a final report. The preliminary report contains no indication of abuse of funds or substantial use of facilities for these particular transactions. What was the second question?

Mr. MacKay: Previous investigation.

[Mr. Stevens.]

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): There apparently was an investigation at the time the dispute arose with regard to the previous chairmanship of the Anti-Dumping Tribunal. There has been an investigation. I have inquired of the Mounted Police in this regard. At the moment of speaking I do not have a report in that regard. Mr. Gauthier indicated to me that the transactions at that time were the subject of investigation, but there were no further proceedings from that.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, actually the question I wanted to put to the minister is the second question asked by my friend from Central Nova. Since the minister did not answer the question, I can ask it now. In light of this experience, is the minister recommending to the Prime Minister or to his cabinet colleagues a tightening up of the guidelines so that this kind of experience will not happen again? I have in mind the loopholes in the situation, because the onus is on the public servant to report only the things that he might think would be matters in conflict.

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): Mr. Speaker, the difficulty with the position taken by the hon. gentleman is that it appears to be a position that would require the continuous surveillance of senior public servants by the government. I have some doubt concerning whether employees in whose judgment trust is placed should be treated in that way by being under continual surveillance. The question has been raised of the required time in which to declare their interest in all personal matters which could conflict with their duties.

My understanding of the matter is that public servants, strictly speaking—and in this case we are talking about an autonomous tribunal—have now been required to declare interests which might possibly conflict with their duties. So the declaration is there in that case. The matter has not been finalized in relation to the tribunals because the question of the independence of a court of record, for example, is raised by the existence of such a tribunal. Very obviously, we will have to have further discussion about this problem. The hon. member for Fundy-Royal says that is an even stronger reason to subject to scrutiny people who are in a quasi-judicial position. I think one would want to consider whether someone who has been put in a quasi-judicial position should be subject to that kind of surveillance by the administration.

Mr. Speaker: I propose to finalize the questioning by recognizing the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre for one supplementary, the hon. member for Lotbinière, the hon. member for Grenville-Carleton, and the hon. member for Wellington-Grey-Dufferin-Waterloo.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, I have just one more question. May I ask the minister if it would not be more fair to all public servants to require full disclosure by all those above a certain level?

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): Mr. Speaker, as I understand it—and I sought to confirm this with the President of the Privy Council—that is indeed the case with regard to senior public servants who are in the structure of the ministries, strictly speaking. There has, however, been a question with regard to the position of members, among