

Oral Questions

it produces a product the world is willing to buy, not because somebody hands out a contract to tide it over.

Let us address the real problems and then maybe we can find real solutions.

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IMMIGRATION AND REFUGEE BOARD

Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, from all accounts members of the Immigration and Refugee Board can be divided into at least two camps: the Tory appointments led by the chair of the committee, Ms. Mawani, and the Liberal appointments headed by the minister's friend, Mr. Schelew.

Documents have been leaked; confidential conversations have been released; and the Privacy Act has been thrown out the window. All this turmoil at the IRB is the result of an appointment system rife with patronage and political infighting.

My question is for the minister. Will the minister now admit that the IRB should be completely freed from political patronage? Will he establish a more credible process for dealing with immigrant and refugee applications?

Hon. Sergio Marchi (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government has indeed made a lot of appointments with credibility, with experience and with integrity, to the point where the press secretary to the leader of the Reform Party was quoted as saying in *The Toronto Star* earlier this year: "A lot of Canadians will be pleased to see this point on appointments is a promise from the election that has been kept, to make appointments on merit rather than on political connections".

• (1425)

The system however is far from perfect. We have suggested a number of reforms that are currently before the agency and program review process headed by the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs. If the Leader of the Opposition has further recommendations we would be pleased to hear them.

Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, let us discuss one particular appointment then. The minister's friend, Mr. Schelew, is accused of bullying board members into making decisions which were against their best judgment. Then when an investigation is proposed he attempts to influence his accusers with information released by the minister's own department.

Surely this is grounds for the dismissal of this particular appointee. Will the minister now ask for his friend's resignation,

or does he condone this type of behaviour on behalf of his own appointees?

Hon. Sergio Marchi (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are being absolutely open in following the process. When I received the allegations I did not cover them up; I did not hide. I gave them to the chair of the refugee board and asked her to review them appropriately.

I am now in receipt of a report given to me by the chair recommending a certain course. I have requested and obtained a response from the deputy chair to those recommendations. Before the end of the week we will make a decision based on the facts and what is appropriate.

Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, there are problems with the application of the Privacy Act in the minister's own office.

Yesterday the justice minister said that he could not release the details of his official's advice to the minister of immigration on the Schelew affair because: "It is not the practice of the Department of Justice to disclose publicly the advice that it gives to client departments". It seems however that the immigration department practice is to release confidential advice at the drop of a hat, especially when the hat belongs to the minister's friend.

I ask the Minister of Justice: Are there two standards of privacy in the country; one for the protection of ministers of the crown and another for the protection of ordinary Canadian citizens?

Hon. Sergio Marchi (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I simply reject out of hand the inflammatory, biased and unsubstantiated allegations that the member opposite has just made.

The names were released by a justice lawyer to the lawyer of the deputy chair. Advice was sought from the legal branch of the Department of Justice. That advice was received and the action was in full accordance with the law.

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[Translation]

SHIPYARDS

Mr. Yves Rocheleau (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Industry.

In 1986, the federal government asked Quebec to rationalize its shipyard activities. Ninety per cent of the rationalization of shipyards in Canada has taken place in Quebec, with 1,700 jobs lost when Versatile Vickers in Montreal and Marine Industries in Sorel closed down.