

Oral Questions

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, I find it incredible that the Hon. Member opposite keeps asking the same question. That question has been asked three, four or five times, and has been answered each and every time by the Prime Minister. I invite him to go back and read the answers.

Mr. Riis: I have read each of those responses and at this point I do not recognize the difference in the two cases.

Mr. Andre: Keep throwing mud.

DECISIONS CONCERNING MINISTERS

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops—Shuswap): Mr. Speaker, if it is clear, will the Deputy Prime Minister please explain succinctly and clearly the difference in the two cases?

• (1440)

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, I am not sure, but I think there is a rule in this House which says that questions which are repetitious or out of order—

Mr. Broadbent: No.

Mr. Mazankowski: This is exactly the same question as the first question.

Some Hon. Members: No.

Mr. Mazankowski: It is exactly the same question which was asked in the House on several occasions and exactly the same question the Prime Minister answered.

Mr. Speaker: I would like to bring to the attention of Hon. Members that it has often been suggested in past practice that the same question ought not to be repeatedly asked. In the event the same question is asked, the Minister is under no obligation to answer. The difficulty, of course, is that there will be an argument, or often is, between the Minister and the Member asking it as to whether or not it is the same question.

However, a Minister, who is in the position of believing the question has been asked before, is under no obligation to answer it, and that is the rule.

CANADA LANDS COMPANY JOBS

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Deputy Prime Minister. It concerns the administration of the Government. Newspaper reports today suggest that the cousin of the former Minister of Public Works, the Hon. Member for Joliette, was appointed to run the Canada Lands Company; the Minister's former chauffeur got a job as an officer manager with the corporation, and another friend of the Minister, who was convicted of fraud, was also rewarded at the Canada Lands Company. Besides asking the Deputy Prime Minister what qualifications these people have, I ask specifically, was he or

the Prime Minister aware of these facts? And what steps, if any, were taken to correct this outrageous situation?

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to have the opportunity to clear up some of the inaccuracies and false statements made in this Canadian Press story. It seems it is becoming its practice.

By the way, 71 per cent of the people of that district voted for the Hon. Minister of State without portfolio. Is it any wonder that some appointments down there are people who supported him? What false reasoning and slanderous kinds of accusations to make!

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Crosbie: With respect to this matter, it is the municipality at Joliette which made a decision on what consulting firm to hire to do a certain feasibility study. The site of the land which was decided upon as being the best land is owned by Air Joliette Incorporated, not by Pierre Perrault. There is a whole series of other inaccuracies all strung together to make matters look bad for the Minister of State without Portfolio. It is scandalous for the Hon. Member not to do any checking, then to use false statements made in the Canadian Press story and repeat them in this House, hoping they will get more circulation as a result.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some Hon. Members: More, more!

Mr. Boudria: Mr. Speaker, it was to be expected that this particular Minister would stand up and defend patronage in this House, for obvious reasons. I repeat to this Minister and to the Government that they have not denied the allegations I made concerning the Canada Lands Company.

GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENTS

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is directed to the Deputy Prime Minister. Does the Government still stand by the solemn commitment made by the Leader of the Conservative Party on July 16, 1984 when he said about patronage: "We are going to bring in a brand new dimension to them of objectivity and representation and fairness for all Canadians"? Do those appointments qualify under that definition or don't they? If they don't, what is the Minister going to do to correct it?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, in my 19 years in this House I have never seen such shameful conduct—

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: I ask the Hon. Minister to deal as exactly as the Minister can with the question which was asked, give a reply, and perhaps we can diminish the noise level in the Chamber just a little bit.