

Oral Questions

What action is the Minister going to take to respond and take action to stop this harassment by the United States Congress and administration? He brought out a paper this morning entitled *Growing Together*. He did not reveal how he was going to stop this harassment by the United States government.

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister, President of the Privy Council and Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, under the U.S. trade law they have the right to examine these kinds of issues. Canada is very confident that the results of that investigation will clearly demonstrate that U.S. producers are subsidized to a greater extent than Canadian producers. That has been confirmed under the free trade agreement and ratified both by the Secretary of Agriculture and myself.

Mr. Foster: When the free trade deal passed the House of Commons, the government turned down an amendment which would have given Canadian agriculture producers and other producers in this country the same kind of tools that the United States administration and producers have. That is to say, they could have a government agency like the International Trade Commission gather data and monitor exports so as to harass them.

Is the Minister willing to take action or bring in similar legislation to that provided to the United States producers where they can simply ask a government agency to start to gather information and to monitor a situation so as to harass those producers?

Mr. Mazankowski: I find it incredible. I do not know what this member has against success. If he looked at page 28 of *Growing Together*, he would find that the United States is now one of the top five agriculture markets that Canada has. That is the record that we have and that is going to continue. It is being augmented by the free trade agreement. Why does he want to condemn our best customer?

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• (1450)

[Translation]

THE SOLICITOR GENERAL

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Solicitor General. Mr. Speaker, in the summer of 1988, some very

serious charges of influence peddling were brought against the former Member for Chambly, Mr. Richard Grisé. However, search warrants were not issued until November 21, several months later. Considering very serious charges of political interference in a recent case, I would now like to ask the Solicitor General whether he could inform the House today about the reasons for postponing action until November 21, in a case of that magnitude.

Hon. Pierre Blais (Solicitor General of Canada and Minister of State (Agriculture)): Mr. Speaker, I repeat that despite statements that were made earlier, the RCMP is an honourable police force that acts without political interference. I would like to refer to what the RCMP Commissioner said himself in June before a committee of this House. He was very emphatic about this. And I believe that in order to protect the integrity of this police force, we must let them do their job and conduct their investigation as they see fit, with the utmost integrity. That is how a police force should function in a country like Canada.

[English]

Mr. Robinson: Mr. Speaker, that is exactly the point. We in this country want to allow the RCMP to do their job without political interference. That is the purpose of this motion, without suggestions that charges were a fragile construction to bring about prosecution.

My supplementary question is this. In light of the very, very grave concerns that have been raised recently with respect to possible political interference in the operations of the RCMP, I want to ask the Solicitor General whether he is prepared to review the record in the case of Richard Grisé and to very carefully examine why there was a delay from the summer of 1988 until November 21, the day of the election before search warrants were issued. Will he assure that there was no political interference?

[Translation]

Mr. Blais: Mr. Speaker, I fail to see why the Hon. Member chooses to ignore what the RCMP Commissioner said. The Commissioner is not just anyone. He is in charge of RCMP operations. Does the Hon. Member refuse to believe the RCMP Commissioner when he says before a committee of this House that there is absolutely no interference? Well, I do believe the Commissioner when he says that.