

Oral Questions

[Translation]

THE ADMINISTRATION

OPPORTUNITY TO RECONSIDER APPOINTMENT OF MR. JEAN BAZIN TO SENATE

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Deputy Prime Minister and, again, concerns the Saint-Jean land flip.

Canadians have now been informed that Lette & Associates, former lawyers for Oerlikon, had warned the company about the land transaction, and that they were sacked for their pains.

Since the business and thus the files went to the law firm of the Prime Minister's friend, Mr. Jean Bazin, doesn't it stand to reason that the Prime Minister's friend knew or at least ought to have known about the land deal? And doesn't it also stand to reason today that Mr. Bazin's appointment to the Senate should be reconsidered, at least until the inquiry is over with?

[English]

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has been very precise on the dates when the information was first given to him. Mr. Bazin has issued a statement. If the Hon. Member wished to read and reflect on those statements, he would have the answer to his question.

[Translation]

AWARDING OF CONTRACTS—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, that is exactly why I am asking these questions, because we are getting conflicting information.

The newspapers say this appointment had no connection with the practice of law. Again, as far as hiring the law firm of the Prime Minister's friend, Mr. Jean Bazin, is concerned, I want to ask the Deputy Prime Minister: Do you have to hire one of the Prime Minister's pals to be awarded a contract by this Government?

[English]

Mr. Crosbie: What a scumball!

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): Contemptible!

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, an answer to that question would only dignify the question, and I think it would be inappropriate for me to do that.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST GUIDELINES—COMPLIANCE BY FORMER GENERAL

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton—Melville): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of National Defence. The Minister has stated that General Peart had complied with Section 58 of the Conflict of Interest Guidelines, which pertains to the fact that he wrote a letter and received clearance from the Deputy Minister General.

Section 60, Subsection (c) of the Conflict of Interest Guidelines prohibits full-time ministerial appointees from working with or counselling a company for commercial purposes on the policies of the Department which he has left, for a period of one year after he has left that Department. In light of that, my question is this. Since General Peart is now the vice-president of corporate affairs with Oerlikon, which has a significant contract with the Department of Defence, is General Peart not in violation of Section 60, Subsection (c) of these guidelines?

Hon. Perrin Beatty (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, again we have innuendo against a distinguished former General of the Canadian Forces.

Mr. Broadbent: It's a question.

Mr. Beatty: We receive questions from the NDP, and then they try to drown out the answer.

Ms. Jewett: When you make a silly remark like that.

Mr. Beatty: I wonder if they will give me the courtesy of responding to the Hon. Member's question.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I would ask all Hon. Members to permit the Minister to respond. The question, although long, was quite straightforward.

Mr. Beatty: Indeed it was, and the answer is quite straightforward.

As I indicated to the Leader of the New Democratic Party, General Peart communicated with the Assistant Deputy Registrar General and fully disclosed to him. The finding of the Assistant Deputy Registrar General was that he was not in conflict of interest. Since receiving the question from the Leader of the NDP, I have called the Assistant Deputy Registrar General specifically with regard to the section cited by the Leader of the NDP, and by my hon. colleague opposite. Again the Assistant Deputy Registrar General said there was no conflict of interest. The Hon. Member is welcome to call him.

GUIDELINE PROVISION QUERY

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton—Melville): Can the Minister then explain why there would not be a conflict when Section 60, Subsection (c) explicitly states that you cannot give counsel for commercial purposes for a period of one year? Could the Minister tell us what the guideline means, if it doesn't mean that he cannot work for a company like Oerlikon for a period of one year after leaving the Department? What does this guideline mean, if that is not the case?

Hon. Perrin Beatty (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, if the Hon. Member wishes an interpretation of the guidelines, why does not ask the official charged with the responsibility of interpreting them? His number is 995-0721.

Mr. Cassidy: He used that in the Stevens inquiry, too.