

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

CANADIAN NATIONAL RAILWAYS

Mr. Brian Tobin (Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister. Yesterday, the Prime Minister dismissed calls for the resignation of Brian Gallery from the board of CN by suggesting the situation was not urgent. I suggest to the Prime Minister that CN's integrity as a Crown corporation is at stake, as is the integrity of the conflict of interest guidelines authored by the Prime Minister.

Will the Prime Minister assure the House today that Mr. Gallery, the Prime Minister's appointment as acting chair, as a member of the board of CN, has resigned or has been removed effective today from the board of CN? Will he further assure the House that a thorough, complete and independent investigation into Mr. Gallery's activities at CN will be carried out and made public?

[Translation]

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I will repeat, substantially, what I said yesterday. The decision concerning allegations reported by *The Globe and Mail* and other newspapers—these have been evaluated and will have to be evaluated by the chairman of the CN board of directors.

This morning, I was again in touch with the chairman of the board who is looking at the facts, and I have been informed, Mr. Speaker, that Mr. Brian Gallery has resigned as vice-chairman. I think we should let the chairman of the board assess the facts and report his findings, and we will then look at his assessment and the recommendations made in his report.

[English]

Mr. Brian Tobin (Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte): Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for his answer. I have a supplementary question for the Minister of Transport.

The minister should know that Canadian National is refusing to provide members of this House and indeed other interested parties with a copy of the logbook for

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the executive dining car used by the president and/or chairman and/or any of 26 vice-presidents at CN.

Since Crown corporations are not required to comply with the access to information code, the only way that information can be made available is as a result of a request by the Minister of Transport. I ask the Minister of Transport, will he direct—

• (1420)

Mr. Mazankowski: How far back do you want to go?

Mr. Tobin: —the President of CN to make the logbook on all of those eight executive cars available to members of the House of Commons so that we may ascertain, as members, that those cars have only been used for legitimate CN purposes and for no other private purpose?

[Translation]

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I am always surprised when the Liberal Party demands an explanation about rules they themselves made when they were in power. I may remind the hon. member once again that the integrity of the proceedings in this House depends basically on one thing: an assessment of the facts. The hon. member referred to reports about the use of the dining car, and so forth. I believe Canadians are satisfied when they hear that the person responsible for the corporation, the chairman of the board, is looking at the facts of the case to which the hon. member referred, and that depending on his assessment of those facts, he will report to the Minister of Transport and we will then consider what our response will be. I think everything is there, everything is open. I hope the hon. member will have the patience to wait for the normal process to take its course.

[English]

Mr. Brian Tobin (Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte): Mr. Speaker, it is indeed a pathetic sight to see the Minister of Transport attempt to duck, on behalf of himself and the Prime Minister, the responsibility for this mess by passing it over to the brand new chairman of CN who has only been in the job a few months and who, by the way, was appointed much like Mr. Gallery, as a consequence of his presumed ability and his affiliation with certain members opposite.