

SENATE REFORM

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Deputy Prime Minister. Maybe the Deputy Prime Minister would recognize that last evening's election of a Senate nominee in Alberta is a very important historical step for this country. As a simple straightforward parliamentarian he would not want to hide behind obscure answers about lists of names but recognize the election as being a clear question of the will of the people being responded to by this government.

Has the Deputy Prime Minister been in touch with the Prime Minister in his sojourn overseas and can he now say that the Prime Minister will provide the assurance that the prerogative of the Prime Minister will be used clearly to appoint to the Senate the nominee who was elected last night in the province of Alberta for the Senate?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister, President of the Privy Council and Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is aware of the process that has been established under the Meech Lake Accord. There are constitutional responsibilities that the Prime Minister has to uphold. There are also conditions that he is obligated to uphold under the provisions of the Meech Lake Accord.

The Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition asks if Mr. Getty signed the accord. The answer is, yes. I have it right here in front of me. To enlighten the hon. member in case he has not read the Meech Lake Accord, Article 2, which deals with Section 25 (1) of the Constitution, states: "Where a vacancy occurs in the Senate the government of the province to which the vacancy relates may, in relation to that vacancy, submit to the Queen's Privy Council of Canada the names of persons who may be summoned to the Senate."

Subsection 2 states: "Until an amendment to the Constitution of Canada is made in relation to the Senate pursuant to Section 41, of the Constitution Act, 1982, the person summoned to fill a vacancy in the Senate shall be chosen from among the persons whose names have been submitted under Subsection 1, by the government of the

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province to which the vacancy relates and must be acceptable to the Queen's Privy Council of Canada."

There is a clear constitutional obligation.

Mr. Lapierre: How about the people?

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): How about the people of Alberta?

Mr. Mazankowski: There is an obligation to uphold the spirit and the letter of the Meech Lake Accord which was signed by the Premier of the Province of Alberta, Mr. Getty. The Prime Minister is fully prepared to honour his obligations and his responsibilities within that context.

Mr. Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): Mr. Speaker, I would express my disappointment in the answer of the Deputy Prime Minister because when he talks about honouring obligations, there is a much higher obligation to respond to, and that is the will of the people expressed through the ballot box. That is the highest order in this House.

I want to ask the Deputy Prime Minister specifically this in relation to that important first step taken in the province of Alberta last night in terms of Senate reform. Going back to the Deputy Prime Minister's own interest in Senate reform, will the government commit today that it will undertake a joint committee of this House, the Senate and House of Commons, to look at the mandate of the Senate and come forward with a mandate that is more equal, effective and elected than the Senate we have had up until now?

• (1430)

Is this government going to show its commitment to Senate reform as the people of Alberta did last night?

Mr. Mazankowski: Mr. Speaker, there clearly is a commitment. Part and parcel of the Meech Lake Accord was the fact that the first item on the agenda after the Meech Lake Accord was adopted—I trust that that is still the official position of the Liberal Party—

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Mazankowski: —was to accept the Meech Lake Accord. I know that there are some variations in some quarters—

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): Are you going to stand up against the people of Alberta?

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Mr. Mazankowski:—but I should also remind the hon. member that it is through the Meech Lake Accord that this process was established.

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): That is a newy.

Mr. Mazankowski: So, surely, Mr. Speaker, there should be some support over there. The fact of the matter is that there is no one more—

Mr. Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): Are you rejecting the people of Alberta?

Mr. Mazankowski: Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member would allow me to answer the question. There is no one more supportive of Senate reform than this government and all members from this side of the House.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mazankowski: When I hear Liberals across the way chirping about Senate reform, let us look at what Senator Hastings says about this process. He says that, "It is a ludicrous and unconstitutional." Senator Olson says, "There is no Senate election. The Prime Minister appoints senators". Mr. Speaker, why don't they get their act together? We have ours.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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FISHERIES

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Fisheries. Yesterday we had a decision that came down clearly against the interests of the people of British Columbia, and beyond that, in terms of resource management and control, all of Canada, a decision which for the first time restricts Canada's right to set the level of a resource level in this country.

Considering that that decision has been said by representatives of the industry to be a U.S. victory; considering that it has been said by representatives of the trade unions in Canada to be a U.S. victory, and considering that it has been said by the U.S. trade representatives to be a U.S. victory, why is the minister the only man on either side of the border who has the nerve to claim that this is a Canadian victory?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Thomas Siddon (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Mr. Speaker, the hon. Leader of the New Democratic Party does not quite have his facts straight. I saw on CBC television last night a female worker on a fish plant line in British Columbia saying that this was a good deal for Canada. She was wearing the union logo.

I think it is unfair to draw conclusions at this point on the basis of a report which the government has 30 days to accept or to dispose of in one way or another. I can repeat, Mr. Speaker, to the hon. member, that on page 37 it states clearly that the panel agreed with Canada's position, that a state could not be obliged to make its fisheries conservation and management regime dependent on co-operation with another state.

That ensures that Canadian sovereignty of fisheries management as enshrined in Canadian fisheries' legislation is preserved in this panel finding.

Mr. Broadbent: Mr. Speaker, the minister knows what is at stake here. It is not simply the issue of conservation. The government gave it away and the trade deal has the right to settle the level of development of resources for industrial purposes in Canada. That is what the government gave away, and the minister knows that.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Broadbent: Yesterday he was describing the decision as a victory. Today in Question Period, the minister is talking about the government taking action, presumably not to accept the decision. He cannot have it both ways. Since the people in British Columbia in particular, and representatives—leaders in industry as well as in the trade union movement—understand the decision for what it is, as threatening their jobs, will the minister now give assurances to the House that the government will exercise its right and refuse to accept this decision?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Siddon: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member and his cohorts keep referring to this threat to jobs but they cannot produce one shred of evidence of one job that has been lost to this date in British Columbia as a result of a GATT dispute which was initiated before the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, and which I believe the New Democratic Party supports, because the fisheries industry is an export industry.

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What new action or process or even what new trick can the minister find to protect the jobs in the fish processing industry? What new tricks does he have up his sleeve?

Mr. Siddon: Mr. Speaker, I do not recall in the debate on the GATT panel ruling about two years ago the opposition suggesting we apply an export tax on our fisheries exports. In fact, I read from the FTA panel finding which clearly recognizes Canada's right to manage our fish stocks, our salmon and herring stocks on the west coast, in accordance with our sovereign right to do so as flowing from the Law of the Sea and enshrined in Canadian legislation.

The panel report, if he will read it carefully, even provides some guidance as to how we should do that. It suggests we should be able to administer all transportation of fish from our west coast fishery, whether by land or by sea, and ensure that that right is unfettered in any way. We will do that.

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Mr. John Harvard (Winnipeg St. James): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister. Today the government leader in the Senate said that in selecting Senators, a list of names must be submitted to the federal government by the province where a vacancy exists. He further stated that more than one name must be submitted in order to respect the provisions of the Meech Lake Accord.

Yesterday Albertans made their democratic choice in a Senate election. Today their premier, Mr. Getty, said that he would submit only one name that of the winning candidate in yesterday's election. Will the Deputy Prime Minister defend the democratic will of the people? Will he respect the choice made by Albertans yesterday? Or is he going to snub them and insist on a list that contains more than one name?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister, President of the Privy Council and Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I think all of us in this House support the principles of democracy. However, we also support the responsibility and the obligation to uphold the constitution and proposed constitutional amendments as was the—

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): This was not ratified!

Mr. Mazankowski: If the right hon. Leader of the Opposition wants to get in on the act again he can. He said that this has not been ratified. That is quite true.

What was agreed was that until such time as it was ratified, the spirit and the letter of the Meech Lake Accord would be fulfilled. The Prime Minister is prepared to do that and we expect the premiers to do likewise.

Mr. Harvard: Mr. Speaker, the Deputy Prime Minister is not going to accept the democratic choice made by Albertans yesterday.

If the Deputy Prime Minister is going to be so stubborn about a list, I will tell him that there was a total of six candidates in the Senate election yesterday. Would he be satisfied with that list? If so, why in heaven's name would he not select the winning name from that list?

Mr. Mazankowski: Mr. Speaker, I am not being stubborn at all. What I am saying is that there is a constitutional obligation and responsibility. There is an agreement that is enshrined in the Meech Lake Accord which the Prime Minister and the premiers agreed to follow in spirit and in letter.

It is certainly not the hon. member's responsibility to submit names or to appoint a Senator. It is the responsibility of the premier of the province of Alberta to submit a list of names. I can assure him that when he does it will be considered in appropriate fashion.

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ILLEGAL DRUGS

Mr. John Brewin (Victoria): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Solicitor General. The rising tide of illegal drug use in this country is an issue of concern to all Canadians. What is the government's answer? We find now that this government has effectively cut back the RCMP's available funds by \$40 million for its law enforcement work in drug trafficking. Furthermore, for the last three weeks the RCMP has not even had the funds to rent cars and has to check "home" before it can make long distance telephone calls.

Will the minister assure Canadians that instead of spending money on high profile campaigns to promote the minister and the government, it will give the RCMP the funds to do its job properly?