

Adjournment Debate

tional Health and Welfare. The ambassador from Israel had been brought in at a later stage.

We are entitled to an explanation. The Minister of National Health and Welfare has made speeches concerning the advertising advantage now held by brewing companies in this country to the disadvantage of distillers. This minister has general supervision over drugs in this country. He has publicly stated that he now has under consideration the entire question of what should or should not be the type of advertising permitted over television and radio by liquor companies and breweries.

Why would the minister not feel there was a conflict of interest in the sense that Mr. Pearson spoke about ten years ago when he chose to accept that free trip to Israel? Why would he not feel that on his return he should at least give an explanation to the Prime Minister, the cabinet and members of this House as to why he chose to take a free trip, possibly showing a conflict of interest in the terms that I have now stated, and which I stated more fully in November of last year? I hope somebody on behalf of the Minister of National Health and Welfare will give those answers tonight.

Hon. Bryce Mackasey (Postmaster General): Mr. Speaker, I must confess that I have not discussed the matter with the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Lalonde) today. By coincidence, I happened to be in the House when the hon. member raised the issue. I do know there is a green paper on conflict of interest before the appropriate committee of the House.

I suppose it is possible the Minister of National Health and Welfare did not consider this a conflict of interest because there are some of us who can regard the Bronfman family in a proper perspective, as a good Canadian group of people who are not out to bribe, intimidate, coerce or seduce ministers of the Crown or anyone in the House of Commons. There is no family in Canada that has done more for Canada in general than the Bronfman family.

Surely every minister and every member of parliament has enough integrity to determine what is going to influence that minister or member to be dishonest, if he is apt to be dishonest. A free trip to Israel today or a free trip across the street tomorrow makes little difference. I am appalled at this attack on the integrity of the Minister of National Health and Welfare. I listened attentively to the hon. member, for whom I have had a lot of respect and whom I have known for a number of years. He did not say one word which linked the minister with the slightest dishonesty in his trip to Israel.

● (2220)

The minister made it abundantly clear why he visited Israel at the invitation of the Ambassador. If the word of a gentleman cannot be accepted in the House of Commons, we shall have to establish a different code for people who see dirt behind every corner.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mackasey: I can remember the former prime minister saying to a member: "Get your mind out of the gutter." Motion agreed to and the House adjourned at 10.23 p.m.