

The work of the committee will be a public demonstration of the unanimous will of Canadian parliamentarians to conform to the highest standards of conduct in the exercise of their public responsibilities.

[English]

Mr. John Nunziata (York South—Weston): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to make some brief submissions on Motion M-22, presented by the hon. member for Nickel Belt.

I have the honour, as does the mover of the motion and the previous speaker and others in the Chamber who will likely speak later, of sitting on a special House of Commons and Senate joint committee that is reviewing Bill C-43. Just yesterday the committee, consisting of MPs and senators from the three major parties, with the exception of NDP senators because they do not have any, they do not believe in the Senate, met at Meech Lake not too far from Parliament Hill to consider this whole matter.

The committee has been sitting over the last number of months and we have had the opportunity to hear from a significant number of Canadians who have expertise in the area of conflict of interest.

As the member indicated, we heard from Judge Parker who headed the royal commission of inquiry that investigated the Sinclair Stevens matter. We heard from Mitchell Sharp, a former cabinet minister, who was the co-author of a report that was tabled several years ago in this House. The member for Etobicoke—Lakeshore was the executive director of that particular committee and I hope he will have the opportunity to speak this evening as well. We heard from a number of individuals, including people who had expertise in other jurisdictions.

The committee will consider now all the issues and hopefully present to this House legislation that will serve the public interest, that will be fair to MPs, senators, bureaucrats and their spouses and that will hopefully meet with the unanimous approval of this House.

I am speaking this evening on my own position and not necessarily the position of the Liberal Party, although a number of my colleagues happen to agree with the position I take on a number of matters.

Private Members' Business

I have some concerns about the position taken by the member for Nickel Belt. He believes in full disclosure. He believes that MPs, senators and their spouses ought to publicly disclose their assets and liabilities.

Mr. Rodriguez: Without quantifying.

Mr. Nunziata: He is through heckling. He is trying to add a few caveats.

The point is that generally speaking the NDP, through that particular—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Order, please. On a point of order, the hon. member for Nickel Belt.

Mr. Rodriguez: Mr. Speaker, I do not mind genuine criticism but I would hope that the member would not misrepresent the position I have taken. I have never suggested that you quantify the assets or the liabilities. That is the position I have taken consistently as he well knows. So do not do that, John. It is not becoming of you.

Mr. Nunziata: With respect, Mr. Speaker, the impression the member of the New Democratic Party left with this House and with all who are viewing and all who might review his comments later is that the NDP wants full public disclosure.

But yes, the member says "without quantifying". If the member from Nickel Belt owns 1,000 shares in the Royal Bank or the Bank of Nova Scotia, that would not be indicated in the public disclosure that he is advocating. It would only indicate that he owns shares—

Mr. Rodriguez: Like it is done in certain provinces.

Mr. Nunziata: —in those banks. That is one of the issues that the committee will have to consider, whether there ought to be full public disclosure on the part of MPs, senators and their spouses.

The committee will also have to decide what sanctions ought to attach to any infractions or improprieties or breaches of the conflict of interest legislation, keeping in mind of course that we are not dealing with criminal activity. The Criminal Code of Canada deals with criminal matters, as the member pointed out, breaches of trust, corruption, bribery. We have the Criminal Code to deal with that kind of activity.