

*Supply*

consent of the House, we could have avoided that no-confidence motion in order to get the Government Members to vote in favour of the motion and refer the matter directly to the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections. The Government rejected that offer. The Minister neglected to say that earlier. The Government refused to waive the no-confidence aspect of the motion. In my opinion, if the Government had wanted to show some credibility and honesty vis-à-vis the people who are listening to us today, it would have accepted our proposal this morning. Therefore, Members who truly want to restore to this institution the credibility it deserves and to the respect they its Members deserve also, would have been given that opportunity.

In view of this refusal, Mr. Speaker, it is clear that the Government does not want to change its way of operating and that the Prime Minister still wants to assume responsibility for the enforcement of these guidelines. When we see all that is going on, Mr. Speaker who is going to believe and ask the public to believe that the Government deserves the confidence it is asking for today. It is outrageous, Mr. Speaker! We are simply asking that the matter be referred to a non-partisan committee which will make recommendations to the House that would come into force should someone act improperly or at least to make sure that Parliament is protected from any impropriety. That is the purpose of today's motion. It is very well drafted, in a non-partisan way. One has only to read it to feel the deep desire of the Progressive Conservative Party, today, to give the general public all the safeguards they are entitled to when it comes to the credibility and integrity of this Parliament.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I repeat once more that I shall support this motion without hesitation. I deeply regret that the Government has rejected the proposal that was made at the outset of the debate this morning, which would have allowed it to support this motion without jeopardizing its own future. In doing so, they would have proved that they were not afraid to give a mandate to the Standing Committee of privileges and elections with a view to establishing guidelines regarding conflicts of interest. The Government refused, Mr. Speaker. This refusal by the Government proves its bad faith. It does not want any committee to be responsible for establishing guidelines because they would be much less partisan than they are now, or at the very least, they would be assessed by a non-partisan committee and not by the Right Hon. Prime Minister of Canada.

I have been in politics for over 15 years, Mr. Speaker, and I do not think that I could have any confidence in the Prime Minister of Canada if he were to guarantee that his guidelines would be applied in a non-partisan manner. It is impossible. We have seen certain things in this House. The fact is that we not only can, but must question certain actions of this Government. When I hear the Minister of Consumer and Corporate

Affairs (Mr. Ouellet) complain and try to criticize the Opposition for its lack of objectivity or honesty, all I can say is that it is our duty to ask some questions and I shall never believe that the Government would expect the Opposition to stop raising controversial issues one fine day. It is our duty to do so to ensure that this country is well governed, and the results that we have seen both with regard to the administration and the behaviour of the Government towards certain individuals, urge us to be even more aggressive and demanding. I believe that the public want us and order us to be more particular about the administration and the judgments of this Government recently. This is why we introduced this motion, so that the Government may take some action if it truly wants this institution to regain the credibility that it is now losing because of the conduct of its Members.

Having in mind this objective that we all share in this House, we have introduced this motion so that the people may have confidence in this institution and in the men and women who have decided to work on the political scene. Of course, certain periods are more difficult than others for the Government, but if the Right Hon. Prime Minister had applied the rules as they were written at the proper time, Canadians would be able to trust this Government. However, the Right Hon. Prime Minister refused to apply the rules as he had said that he would. Instead, he has decided to be lenient to a Minister who lied to him in the House and misled him, because of which the Right Hon. Prime Minister had to recognize that he had himself misled Parliament. He said that he was sorry and washed his hands of the whole affair: "I said I was sorry and that is all there is to it."

I believe, Mr. Speaker, that we have to be more exacting than that. If the Right Hon. Prime Minister is willing to allow his ministers to apply the rules as their conscience dictates, I for one cannot accept it and I do not believe that the Canadian people will accept that every Minister can apply the rules according to his own conscience. I believe that this kind of flexibility is unacceptable and reprehensible, and this is why we can no longer trust the people who govern this country. We are asking that the three political parties represented in this House and this Parliament can at least have their say about the implementation of the guidelines. What should the guidelines be? How can we make sure that there is no conflict of interest? That is important for the credibility and sound management of this country, and that is why once again we recommend that motion today because we were hoping that Hon. Members would find a way to refer this whole issue to a non-partisan Standing Committee. We have provided the Government with an opportunity to do just that, but they refused. Of course, we will be forced to challenge the Government by holding a vote later today, and that will justify Government Members to defeat our motion because otherwise they would be the architects of their own downfall! The one and only justification for the Government to reject our motion was to refuse that we delete the non-confidence feature of the