

to do so. It has a right to appoint whomever they want to appoint. The question is not whether or not they are Conservatives. The question is, are they competent? Do they come from a cross-section of the population? If most of them happen to end up being Conservatives, so be it. If there is the odd Liberal or New Democrat there, okay. But the question is the competence. Do they represent a cross-section of the population and are they not just former presidents or former fund raisers of the Party? There must be something more to the appointments than that kind of a criterion.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I come back to the motion. It still has not been answered by those Hon. Members opposite. Do they or do they not think it appropriate to give an untendered contract to the brother-in-law of a Minister of the Crown? Do you or don't you? That's all.

Mr. Henderson: Mr. Speaker, I agree with the Hon. Member who just spoke. It is an issue not just of the personalities of individuals we are talking about here but it is an issue of the principles and preferential treatment of relatives, people who happen to be in offices and have access to information to which the ordinary person does not. I think that is the interpretation which should be put on this motion before us today.

But we can get into the other issue of patronage appointments. Just last week I heard that one of the wharfingers in my area, a fisherman who had fished for 27-some years, has been replaced. A wharfinger is a person who looks after the wharves, the ports and harbours, tying up the vessels and that sort of thing. He was replaced by a chicken farmer because the chicken farmer happened to belong to the Progressive Conservative Party.

The whole issue of getting very close to the appearance of preferential treatment is something that this House should take very seriously. All Parties should take it very seriously. As my friend, the Hon. Member for Saint-Henri-Westmount (Mr. Johnston), said today, no one is questioning the integrity of the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson). What we are questioning is the possibility of this appointment being perceived as preferential treatment. That is the issue about which the Hon. Member is speaking and that is the motion which is before the House here today.

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Minister of State (Finance)): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased today to speak on this ludicrous motion. It is not only sanctimonious, it is pompous. The reason I am here wearing my red dress, Mr. Speaker, is that red is the colour of defiance, and I defy Hon. Members opposite to find anything wrong with the judgment and the integrity of the people from this side of the House.

I know that the motion which was put forward by the New Democratic Party—which it expects us all to take with enormous seriousness—it is a serious topic. I would not deny that conflict of interest is a serious topic to discuss in this Chamber. However, the Hon. Member for Regina West (Mr. Benjamin) who spoke just previously, pointed out that there were no contracts, no conflicts of interest, or anything done against the

public interest by the New Democratic Party of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Benjamin: I didn't say that.

Mrs. McDougall: Well, let me just point out, Mr. Speaker, that—

Mr. Althouse: No Party officials got appointments.

Mrs. McDougall: No Party officials. Well, there are two advertising agencies, Dunsky Advertising Ltd., and Struthers Associates.

Mr. Benjamin: Not Party officials.

Mrs. McDougall: When the New Democratic Government was elected in Saskatchewan, it fired the old agencies,—

An Hon. Member: Shame!

Mrs. McDougall:—and retained two small ad agencies, which had some modest affiliation with the NDP. Struthers was owned by two former executive assistants to NDP Ministers—

Mr. Benjamin: Actually there were three. You missed one.

Mrs. McDougall:—and Cameron Cooper, one of those principals, was the son of Marjorie Cooper, a former CCFMLA. Shucks, golly, gee whizz, isn't that a coincidence?

Mr. Benjamin: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I just want the Hon. Minister to know that Cameron Cooper was not Marjorie Cooper's son.

Ms. Mitchell: Get your facts right, Barb.

Mrs. McDougall: Well, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Cooper and Mr. Eaton, the other principal, had worked in a senior capacity with Elwood Cowley, who just happened to be the provincial campaign manager. Isn't that unusual?

Mr. Benjamin: He was a Cabinet Minister also.

Mrs. McDougall: Let me turn to some other topics, Mr. Speaker. I am here speaking on this motion as someone who has known our Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson) for 30 years. I know something about his judgment and his integrity. We went to university together. He was known then for his judgment and his integrity. The Hon. Minister of Finance, when he was a teenager, would not even sneak a cigarette behind the bicycle shed. He was a person of integrity then and he is a person of integrity now.

An Hon. Member: What a boring guy.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mrs. McDougall: I want to add, Mr. Speaker, that also at school with us at the time was the new ambassador to the United Nations, Stephen Lewis, who I am sure would agree