

Privilege—Mr. Andre

I suggest that there are in this Chamber over 100 Members who have farmers as members of their associations but who nevertheless regularly participate in agricultural debates and vote on agricultural measures. I submit that there are at least 30 Members opposite whose association memberships include union executives, and yet they regularly participate in discussions and votes pertaining to labour matters. In no such instance would it occur to me to suggest a conflict of interest. It would not be appropriate for me to suggest that a Member of Parliament absent himself or herself from discussion, debate or vote on a question because some member of his or her volunteer riding association happens to be employed by a union, or an oil company, or carries on a farming operation.

The question raised by the Member for Vancouver—Kingsway was prefaced with a request that I absent myself from any discussions having to do with the Dome/Amoco deal because a member of my executive, a member of my riding association, is an employee of Amoco. He then went on to ask the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) whether in fact I had ever discussed the role in this of Petro-Canada.

I can tell the Hon. Member that there are members of my riding executive who work for Petro-Canada. What does that imply? Is no one allowed to participate in the political process as a volunteer worker for political Parties if in fact his or her employer, at some time, might have business of interest to the Government of Canada, or vice versa?

While there was no accusation of conflict of interest, a conflict of interest was clearly implied. I suggest to the Hon. Member that the honourable thing for him to do would be to rise in his place and acknowledge that there is no conflict of interest; or, alternatively, to accuse me of a conflict of interest and have the matter referred to the Standing Committee on Elections, Privileges and Procedure so that it might be adjudicated by a panel of this House. Otherwise, I am placed in an impossible position, as would be every other responsible concerned Member of this House.

We are going to have to examine the credentials of those who volunteer to work on our respective riding associations, those who choose to work as volunteers in the democratic process. It is an impossible position to be in.

I deeply resent the implication that Mr. Sherrold Moore might have been doing something improper. All he is guilty of is good citizenship.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Ian Waddell (Vancouver—Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the Minister raising the matter. It is, I think, an important matter.

Let me just say to the Minister that I have not accused Mr. Sherrold Moore of doing anything wrong, of committing any sin, as the Minister put it. I have not accused him of being guilty of anything. I have not made any such accusation, nor do I intend to. Nor have I accused the Minister of a conflict of interest. As a matter of fact, I think I pointed out in my

question that I specifically made no accusation of conflict of interest.

It is my duty as a Member of Parliament to ask tough questions. Tough questions do not necessarily lead to a matter of privilege. It is a tough question. At the time of the biggest corporate takeover in the history of this country, the corporate takeover of Dome by Amoco Canada, a very controversial takeover, the Minister has on his riding executive an employee of Amoco Canada.

Insofar as the takeover itself is concerned, the Government seems to be standing on the side, with the Opposition calling for a Canadian solution. We all know the debate. There is a lot at stake for the companies involved, for the country, for the political process. Given that situation, I am entitled to raise the question I raised.

This is not an ordinary member of his executive. He is a fund raiser, and he is raising funds at a time—

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Waddell: Well, I have to point that out. There can be a difference.

The Minister has confirmed that Mr. Moore is a fund raiser, an individual who is raising money at this particular time, a time when the proposed takeover is such a hot issue in the country.

In my question, I asked the Minister about the possibility of the appearance of a conflict of interest. Should the Amoco takeover go through it is a matter that will come before the Cabinet. I therefore asked the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney), without alleging any conflict of interest, whether there had been a decision affecting the role of Petro-Canada in terms of whether or not it could bid against Amoco for Dome. That is something the Government has in its power, and it is part of the issue in this debate. For that reason, I put the question to the Prime Minister, and it was a proper question.

I am not accusing the Minister of anything. In my view, and I think this would be the view of the Canadian people, this would be an inappropriate time for the Minister to have on his riding executive a fund raiser who has a high position in Amoco Canada. The Hon. Member, as Minister for Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Andre), might have to deal with this question at some point, either within his Department or within Cabinet.

It seems to me that I am entitled to ask the question, and I do not think it leads to a question of privilege.

Mr. Speaker: I shall hear the Hon. Member further, but I would ask that the Chair be extended the courtesy of being sent the letter which was quoted when the question was asked. If there is a copy available, I should like to see it.

I will continue to hear from the Hon. Member.

Mr. Waddell: Mr. Speaker, I shall arrange to have the page deliver the letter to you.