

that there was any. What we are saying, and what we have been saying, is that there has been a conflict of interest. However, the Government's refusal to face up to its moral responsibilities has not only damaged Parliament, since that is also what is involved in all this, but it has perhaps damaged beyond repair the personal reputation of the Minister in terms of his being able to move back into another portfolio.

The case I wanted to make before we heard of the Minister's decision this morning is that the Government and the Minister have failed to meet the existing guidelines. The Minister has done so in a way which ought to have been obvious to anyone. It was something which was obvious to the people of Canada. Everywhere one travelled in the past two weeks it was not necessary to bring up the issue. I am sure this is something which members of the Government knew very well. Wherever one went people were saying: "What is going on? When is Mr. Stevens going to do the right thing?"

I wish to put a couple of points on the record since Members on both sides of the House know that this type of matter is extremely unpleasant. It is not something with which Members of Parliament like to deal. I am sure there may be one or two individuals in the House who enjoy this type of thing. I even see some smirks on the faces of Members opposite. However, I wish to say to the Government House Leader that some of us do not enjoy—

Mr. Hnatyshyn: What smirks?

Mr. Broadbent: I saw a smile, and the implication was that perhaps some people—

Mr. Hnatyshyn: Take it easy.

Mr. Broadbent: I wish to say to the Minister that there are a great many people who would rather be discussing other matters than the matter of conflict of interest in the House of Commons. If the Government had done the right thing, we would not be discussing it now.

Mr. Hnatyshyn: You're disgusting, that's what you are.

Mr. Broadbent: We will hear what the Minister has to say in a few minutes. I wish to say that the point we want to make on this matter has been a point embedded, in our view, in the parliamentary system since democracy evolved in parliamentary democracies, but more recently in different Governments. I wish to quote from the guidelines laid down by a previous Conservative Prime Minister, the present Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Clark) when he headed the Government of Canada. In those guidelines he stated:

Ministers must perform and appear to perform their official responsibilities and arrange their private affairs in a manner that will conserve and enhance public confidence and trust in Government and that will prevent conflicts of interest from arising.

That was the general principle enunciated by the former Prime Minister in terms of his guidelines.

Supply

I would now like to quote from the principles of the guidelines outlined by the Right Hon. Pierre Elliot Trudeau when he headed the Government in 1980. I quote from the then Government House Leader who stated:

Ministers should also bear in mind their individual responsibility to prevent conflicts of interest, including those that might conceivably arise or appear to arise out of dealings in property or investments which are owned or managed in whole or in part, by their spouses or dependent children.

So although there was not a specific provision for spouses in the 1980 guidelines, as there was in the guidelines of the Clark Government, there was a very specific principle laid down to the effect that the financial activities of spouses were seen to be covered, even if the technical detail of a trust for spouses was not.

I now come to the task force set up by the former Government which was jointly chaired by Michael Starr and Mitchell Sharp. The point they make in their recommendations is: "These guidelines do not directly apply to spouses". This is what the Government ultimately accepted. They recommend:

It goes without saying that Ministers must not transfer their assets to their spouses or dependent children with a view to avoiding the requirements of these guidelines. Ministers should also bear in mind their individual responsibility to prevent conflicts of interest, including those that might conceivably arise or appear to arise out of dealings in property or investments which are owned or managed in whole or in part, by their spouses or dependent children.

Finally, I wish to quote from the words of the Prime Minister himself as set out in the letter he sent to all Ministers accompanying the present set of guidelines. It was the Prime Minister himself who stated:

However, I wish it to be understood clearly by all Ministers that they have an individual responsibility to prevent conflicts of interest, including those that might arise out of activities of their spouses or dependent children or the dealings in property or investments which are owned or managed, in whole or in part, by their spouses or dependent children.

I wish to say that if the last point coming from the Prime Minister himself to his Ministers accompanying the set of guidelines had been acted upon by the present Minister, we would not be having this debate today.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, we have had a blatant violation of all these principles by the Minister and others who are accountable to the House of Commons, and the arguments presented by the Government in support of Mr. Stevens since the beginning of this affair are deplorably weak.

These arguments are based exclusively on Mr. Stevens' statement that he had put his assets in a blind trust, at the appropriate time and in the appropriate manner.

The Minister carefully avoided answering charges that he failed to conform to other requirements drawn up by the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney).

Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister had a responsibility to ask for the Minister's resignation before he left for Japan. Since then, I may point out that the Deputy Prime Minister (Mr. Nielsen) has shown incredible insensitivity. He has shirked his