

*Supply*

**Mr. Ouellet:** I am certainly not afraid, Mr. Speaker. I think that it is the Opposition who is afraid because it had a choice. It did not have to call for a non-confidence vote. When the Opposition introduced the motion now under consideration, it could have ensured that there would not be a vote at the end of the debate today, and especially not a vote which might result in the fall of the Government. I do not think that the Canadian people will be fooled. The Hon. Member and her colleague for Saskatoon-West (M. Hnatyshyn) mentioned a few names earlier. They say that the motion does not refer to anyone in particular, but they still give names; they talk about Coalgate and give a whole list of former ministers. I call this a witch hunt and I believe that the Members opposite are afraid to be consistent, of going outside the House and making specific charges against certain individuals. To simply insinuate certain things does not take much courage. The Hon. Member has asked me why I am afraid. I shall ask her the same question: Why is she afraid? Let her rise and put her seat on the line and make a formal accusation against someone! We shall see whether she is afraid or not!

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** The question period has now expired. I now recognize the Hon. Member for Joliette (Mr. La Salle).

● (1600)

**Hon. Roch La Salle (Joliette):** Mr. Speaker, the House has heard a number of comments on this important question which is the subject of a motion put by my party today, and therefore, following the comments made by the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Ouellet), I should like to remind the House that there is indeed justification for bringing this motion forward today.

I do not think the purpose of this motion is to go over the so-called Gillespie affair again. However, considering what has been going on in the House for a number of months and especially in the last two or three weeks, I think in the light of this information, the Opposition had a duty to ask the questions it did on a subject which in fact was directly related to what are also known as the conflict of interest guidelines.

Mr. Speaker, perhaps we should recall how at first, the former Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources refused to answer any questions. Perhaps we should also recall that he misled his Prime Minister, and that as a result, the Right Hon. Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau), misled the House. Excuses were made, and indeed, how easy it would be for anyone who wanted to do something wrong to excuse himself afterwards in the House. Sure, I stole this or that from you, but I am sorry, I needed it or may be I had some other reason. In the circumstances, I think we had a duty to put this question regarding the guidelines and the policy that were tabled by the Right Hon. Prime Minister himself.

Mr. Speaker, I think Canadians ought to know whether the Members of this House really intend to provide that credibility which Canadians have a right to expect. I think that is the question before the House today, and we are giving Hon.

Members an opportunity to take part in the debate and to support a motion that would simply be referred to the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections for an in-depth study, and the Committee would then formulate recommendations for the House. It should not be left up to the Right Hon. Prime Minister of Canada. Furthermore, today, the guidelines and recent events have proved without a doubt that the Right Hon. Prime Minister is actually both judge and party to the case. Let him judge himself whether he should ask for or demand the resignation of a Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister (Mr. MacEachen), who tells us that as far as he is concerned, it is a matter of conscience. Therefore, if the Minister who spoke earlier told the House that the public is not easily misled, that is absolutely true, and all this business will unfortunately make the Government lose its credibility and give the public the impression that politics is an unsavory profession.

To restore confidence in this institution so that it will get the respect it deserves and have the credibility it needs to govern the country and make it progress, we are presenting a motion that is entirely non-partisan. We are asking that this matter be referred to a Standing Committee of the House, where all three political parties will have an opportunity to make sensible recommendations so that it will not be left up to the Right Hon. Prime Minister to judge whether his Minister did or did not do wrong.

Depending on the importance of his Minister, the Prime Minister might not always give us the same opinion. Had the whole Gillespie affair involved a minister of State without portfolio, how long would the Prime Minister have stood by him? The general public has the right to wonder about that. We know perfectly well that due to the circumstances, everybody decided to back up the accused and reached the conclusion that it is a matter of conscience and that the guidelines are flexible enough to allow for some leeway in their application. One must realize, Mr. Speaker, that the people have not been fooled. We were right to keep at it during Question Period because the more questions we asked, the more we came to realize that something was wrong with the application of the guidelines. Members of the Liberal Party held that same view in the past. It was said earlier today that Mr. Sharp had let it be known at the time that he wished to propose a policy under which Parliament would have and would have been in a position to compel all former Ministers, all civil servants and Members of the Government to comply with the guidelines.

Today, we propose this motion and I do not think I am wrong when I say to the Minister who tells us that our motion automatically entails a non-confidence vote, that we did give the Government this morning the opportunity to waive the non-confidence aspect of the motion in order to avoid to put the Government in a difficult situation. We were ready to do it, as was the New Democratic Party, and with the unanimous