

Supply

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): There being 20 members present, not including the occupant of the chair, debate shall accordingly continue.

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, I have listened attentively to the comments of the member for Halifax West. They were quite good comments. He indicated in his remarks that rules regarding conflict of interest in themselves are insufficient to make people behave properly. I think he is right.

Rules are not a substitute for good behaviour. Rules are there in addition to the first prerequisite, which is of course to have a disposition to obey whatever rules exist and whatever moral code one should have. One cannot be confused with the other. I agree with the member. Just the same, even if he is an hon. member, which he is, it does not mean that we should not have conflict of interest rules.

I want to ask the member a very specific question. He indicated that no member had asked for this conflict of interest bill to be brought before the House. I point to page 15047 of the current session *Debates* in which I asked the following question:

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister and it concerns the government's so-called commitment to ethics in government.

In February 1988 the government introduced a conflict of interest bill and has allowed it to die twice on the Order Paper.

Given that nearly five years has passed since then, is the government in its dying days in office ready to commit itself again to conflict of interest legislation?

That was as late as December 10, the second last day before Parliament adjourned at Christmas. I say to the member, and I give him the opportunity to correct the record, that what he indicated earlier is not factually correct. He will know that.

In terms of the government's commitment to adopting conflict of interest rules, as I just indicated the government first introduced a bill in 1988. It was Bill C-46 which died on the Order Paper. In the new session the government introduced another bill that was identical to the first one, Bill C-114. It died on the Order Paper. A year later the government introduced yet another bill,

Bill C-43—it is still on the Order Paper—the subject of which has now received the unanimous agreement of all parties in a report. That happened in June of last year.

Does the member honestly think it is reasonable after five and a half years of delay to have had nothing happen yet? It has been six months since a unanimous report of a committee and nothing has happened yet. There has not even been a debate in the House. None of the three bills I have mentioned including Bill C-43 has ever been debated in the House of Commons, contrary to what the member said a while ago. Does he honestly think that is reasonable?

Mr. Crosby: Mr. Speaker, perhaps I did not choose my words carefully enough. I do not know if I used a plural or a singular. I agree with the member that there have been efforts made to bring a bill forward, possibly by him and possibly by other members.

He knows as I do the process and procedure in the House of Commons, that the House leaders of all parties get together and agree on a matter being processed in the House of Commons. It is that kind of undertaking I am talking about.

• (1830)

If his House leader confers with the New Democratic Party House leader, gets the consent of independent members, gets the consent of other interested parties, presents that to the government leader and says we are ready to go ahead, and that is refused, I would consider that a matter of real complaint.

As long as members stand in their places or committee members get together in a committee and make a recommendation, I think the member knows that is not necessarily going to advance the bill, or any bill or any measure in the House of Commons. There has to be agreement through the appropriate channels. I was referring to that kind of initiative.

Mr. Lyle Kristiansen (Kootenay West—Revelstoke): Mr. Speaker, I would like to draw to the attention of the member for Halifax West that maybe he was not present in the House during some earlier parts of this debate. There was an attempt on the part of some of us, particularly myself and the member for Essex—Windsor, to try to stop this debate from degenerating to the lower levels where it had a propensity to go earlier.