

*Supply*

that consent. If consent were given by the Government, the matter could be voted on by Government Members secure in the knowledge that they would not be voting the Government out of office.

Why is there this great reluctance on the part of the Government to provide that consent to the suspension of the Standing Order so as to enable its Members to vote as they please in support of this motion?

**Mr. Regan:** Mr. Speaker, I want to say two or three things to the Hon. Member in answer to his question. If he listened to my remarks he heard me say that I do not think it is a question of what the guidelines should be. That can best be determined by people who have the day by day, partisan involvement that we all have here in this House. I think it is the responsibility of whoever is the Leader of the Government of the day. If Parliament does not like the way he carries things out, it can defeat him.

The Hon. Member for Hamilton Mountain is interjecting and criticizing the parliamentary system. If he has a question I will deal with it later but I should like to deal with the Leader of the Opposition's question now.

First of all, in my view a committee is not the proper place for this matter to be considered, so my inclination is against the motion *per se*. Second, this is an opposition day and because the Leader of the Opposition was speaking, he was in the House at eleven o'clock this morning and not away on other business. Otherwise he might not have been here. I suggest he may want to take the question up with the House Leader at three o'clock this afternoon. It could be more definitively dealt with at that time as our House Leader is not here at the moment. If he has a supplementary question perhaps he could put it at that time.

I would like to ask the Leader of the Opposition, however, why he did not give notice of this question on Friday when it was established that this matter would be coming forward today as a non-confidence motion. Why did he not say something like, "Look, we are putting this down as a non-confidence motion but we would really like it not to be a non-confidence motion"?

**Mr. Rose:** Mr. Speaker, I was almost convinced that the Minister of State for International Trade (Mr. Regan) was to be believed when he suggested earlier that it would be up to the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) to decide this because the rest of us were too political. I was almost convinced but not quite. Then when I heard him respond to the question put by the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Nielsen), I became even more concerned about what he was saying. He suggested that really the Prime Minister was the best person to make the judgment because he was not political, that playing politics is a disease that is only caught by Members of the Opposition, and further, that while the public has an opportunity to judge the Prime Minister every four years or every election—

**Mr. Nielsen:** They are the Ajax knights.

**Mr. Rose:**—our behaviour is not equally judged every four years. That is an interesting line of argument.

I think the Minister is not only a Minister of the Crown but is also something of a novelist or story teller, a *bon vivant* and all the rest. The inclination to play politics is not confined to Members on this side. The determination of what is a reasonable allegation or a *prima facie* case of conflict of interest and what is a smear is frequently divided by a very thin line. Most of the time Members on this side have to go on a fishing expedition. We do not have access to information, we are denied documents, and then the Government and the Prime Minister close ranks. *Mum's the word*. So that is the reason we are concerned. When something like this comes up I think, given the proper motion, that the Committee should consider it automatically and be given the relevant documents.

If these things can be ventilated, and the Opposition is inclined to raise doubts in the committee, so will Members of the Government—which has the vast majority of its Members on Committees—be inclined to put the best possible light on it.

In the Coalgate affair, when we questioned the Minister of Finance we did not question his honesty at all. What we questioned was his judgment. What he did, in our view, was a really dumb thing. It was blown out of proportion, in my view—and I have great respect for the Minister—because the Government closed ranks to the obvious set of facts and said there was nothing wrong at all. The difficulty here—

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** The difficulty of the Chair at this point is trying to apportion the time to the various Members who are seeking the floor. Does the Minister care to reply to the question?

**Mr. Regan:** Mr. Speaker, I want to say to the Hon. Member for Mission-Port Moody (Mr. Rose) that I had never hoped to achieve such heights as to convince him. So when he told me that I came very close to it, I was pleased.

I would say again to the Hon. Member that the temptation to play politics is a human element, particularly for people involved in politics. I have never been able to find a Member of any political Party without human weakness—not even the NDP.

When the Hon. Member says that the House should decide whether there has been a breach of the guidelines by a Minister, is he saying that Ministers would be dismissed by a decision of the House rather than by a decision of the Prime Minister? That is the logic that flows from what he says. It goes to the heart of the system. The Prime Minister must make those decisions because he appoints or dismisses Cabinet Ministers. He must answer to the House and eventually to the electorate about whether he does it well.

The Hon. Member spoke of the Minister of Finance with affection. Let him keep in mind that not one iota of evidence has been placed before the House to suggest that Mr. Gillespie and those associated with him, including the Premier of Nova