

*Supply*

look at our partisanship. I think there is going to have to be coming from us an effort, not only an effort, a determination to get away from it once and for all."

Off the record, he said to the reporters, and was quoted as saying, and this is on the other side of the coin, "Let's face it, there is no whore like an old whore. If I had been in Bryce's position, I would have been right in there with my nose to the public trough with the rest of them." What we are faced with is the Caesar's wife principle of not only being pure, but being seen to be pure.

We raised this issue in this motion today and no one on the Government side has yet addressed it. The motion is very narrow. It states:

That, in the opinion of this House, the granting of an untendered contract to the brother-in-law of the present Minister of Finance by the Government of Canada is an unacceptable action.

That is all it says. Hon. Members who have spoken up to this point have not addressed that. If one listened to and believed what the Prime Minister had to say last summer, and immediately following the election, that principle that would have been incorporated in guidelines or would have been followed even prior to written guidelines.

I remind the House of the practices of and what is lived up to in the British Parliament. If what occurred in the instance of the brother-in-law of the Minister of Finance had occurred in the British House, that Minister would have resigned the next day without even being asked to jump or without having to be pushed. A Minister of the Crown in the British Parliament would have done it of his own volition.

Nobody is questioning the Minister of Finance. He is an honest man, very capable. That is not in question. Even if one assumes, as I am prepared to assume, that the Minister had no knowledge whatsoever of his brother-in-law receiving an untendered contract, he would automatically have resigned. These things can happen to Ministers of the Crown from time to time. It has happened in many jurisdictions and there is nothing unusual about that. Sometimes a Minister may be a victim of the mistakes of those working under him or of the mistakes of a colleague, but in the final analysis he is the only one responsible.

● (1450)

I am sorry the Minister of Supply and Services has stepped out for a moment. If the Minister of Supply and Services failed to inform and consult the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson) regarding who would receive the untendered contract, then the Minister of Supply and Services should resign because he failed to carry out his responsibilities and thus made a victim of his colleague the Minister of Finance. If one were to assume that the Minister of Supply and Services did not know that the firm that was to be awarded the untendered contract had in its midst the brother-in-law of the Minister of Finance, then obviously his officials failed to tell him, in which case there are some officials whose heads he should have on a platter. Even if these officials failed to tell him, he is still responsible and has only one recourse if he wants to live up to

the principles and traditions of the British Parliament, the majority of which we in this Parliament have followed for many decades.

Regarding the entire matter of appointments to government service, whether it be the civil service or a Crown corporation, I have always believed that the question to be asked is not so much what an appointee's political proclivities might be but what competence and abilities might be. Political affiliations or records should be secondary if the first two criteria of competence and capabilities have been met.

I do not expect a Conservative Government to appoint a lot of Liberals and NDPers to various boards, commissions and award them contracts. I would not expect a Liberal Government to appoint a lot of Conservatives and NDPers. I would not expect an NDP Government to appoint a lot of Liberals and Conservatives. When making Order in Council appointments, any Government must gather around it people who have the same political beliefs as the Government of the day. There is nothing wrong with that. One must have competent, capable advisers and employees at the senior levels who believe in the policies for which a Government was elected. Anyone who accepts an Order in Council appointment knows darn well that the odds are 99 to one that if there is a change in Government, he is out. That is one of the hazards of that kind of an appointment. There is nothing wrong with that.

We in Canada have not yet reached the level of sophistication, class and couth that exists in the British public service. In Britain, Deputy Ministers and heads of boards study the policies of all political Parties of that country. When the Government changes from one Party to another, because of the professionalism of the senior public service there is not a wholesale firing of Deputy Ministers and heads of boards. These professional senior civil servants are able to go to a new Cabinet Minister within a matter of weeks after his swearing in to say: "Here is your Party's policy on matters pertaining to this Department. We have researched it and here are several options that you can consider in order to implement your policy". That is what I call a professional public servant. Their own personal political preferences have nothing to do with it at all and it is highly unlikely that any of them would ever tell you what their preferences were in any case. There are senior public servants in the British Isles who have been employed for years and years after having been appointed by the Labour Party or the Conservative Party.

We have not yet reached that level of sophistication and maturity in this country. Until we do, the kinds of standards laid down by the Prime Minister himself, whether or not they are in writing yet, are known to every Member of the House and are certainly known to every member of the Cabinet. I am referring to what the Prime Minister said last summer during the election campaign. There is no use spending time discussing who got appointed to the Senate, as much as I would like to use up another half an hour discussing that. However, we have heard about that before so I will not belabour the point.

Some aspersions were cast by the Prime Minister and one or two other Hon. Members from the government side on the