

Supply—Defence Production

March 31, 1955, which are the latest available, that the government through the Department of National Defence under the control of the Department of Defence Production is a major customer of Canada Steamship Lines Limited. I think this reduces to its essential principle the conflict of interest which exists here.

This is not the biggest conflict of interest by any manner of means, Mr. Chairman. If we had a list of the multitude of companies in which this estate is involved we could take that list and the thousands and thousands of companies with which the Department of National Defence has had some connection, and could show in case after case that there was close correlation between the two.

It seems impossible to me that a man fulfilling his responsibilities as conscientiously as I know the minister will fulfil them as executor of this estate would not come into conflict with his responsibilities as Minister of Defence Production. I lay no claim to high legal knowledge, any more than is in the possession of the average businessman, but I think anyone who has had anything to do with the settlement of an estate or the work of an executor knows that one of the fundamental responsibilities of an executor is to maximize the amount to be realized from that estate, to make it as great as the executor possibly can make it. On the other hand, the responsibility of a conscientious minister is to minimize the expenditures of his department and of the government. I realize, of course, that the minister is not one of those who is known as having an interest in minimizing the expenses of his department or of the government as a whole, out that—

Mr. Howe (Port Arthur): On a question of personal privilege, I have been a minister of the government for 21 years and it has been said in this debate that I have spent more government money than any other man who ever lived in Canada. If every little twerp—excuse me—some one who is just out of kindergarten can get up here and slander me as he likes, I do not like it. I think my hon. friend had better withdraw his statement that I have not spent this country's money carefully.

Mr. Hamilton (Notre Dame de Grace): I do not know to whom the minister was referring when he said just out of kindergarten, but I know it was not to me.

An hon. Member: Have you not graduated yet?

[Mr. Hamilton (Notre Dame de Grace).]

Mr. Hamilton (Notre Dame de Grace): Undoubtedly the minister was carried away by his feelings at the moment and I quite understand and excuse him. However, I have no intention of changing or withdrawing any words unless—

Mr. Howe (Port Arthur): Go right ahead; no one expects you to do anything decent. You have never bothered about decency since you have been in this parliament; the official snooper of the opposition.

Mr. Hamilton (Notre Dame de Grace): I have no intention of withdrawing words.

Mr. Drew: Mr. Chairman, are there no terms of decency to be imposed by the Chair in this house?

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

The Deputy Chairman: I am not too certain to what the hon. Leader of the Opposition is referring. I heard statements from both sides of the house both of which were in the nature of a negative. I do not pretend to be able to quote them word for word. The hon. member for Notre Dame de Grace said something to the effect that the minister was not famous for his spending of the funds of the country with care. In his reply the hon. minister stated something to the effect that the hon. member for Notre Dame de Grace was not famous for decency, for doing the decent thing, or something to that effect. If I may say so quite frankly to both sides of the house, I am not called upon to express an opinion as to the courtesy of either expression, but I do not think either one of them went so far as to justify an interruption by the Chair.

Mr. Hamilton (Notre Dame de Grace): As I was saying when the minister made his interjection, I have no intention of withdrawing, unless you so direct, remarks which are perfectly parliamentary and which have been borne out time and again in this house by the minister's own observations and the minister's own answers. When I speak about minimizing the expenditures of this government I am reminded of a French expression which I think is quite adequate, *bon père de famille*. That is a person who is careful, a person who is cautious, a person who examines expenditures in detail before making them, and above all a person who has a frugal attitude toward money he is expending. I suggest that the minister's rather famous observation of two or three years ago, "What's a million dollars?" hardly indicates a person who is going to be noted for care in the expenditure of public funds.

A few minutes ago the minister said rather proudly—I forget his exact words—that he had spent more money than anyone else in the