

Supply

House, why the Government is objecting to passing it unanimously on this occasion? What has changed between then and now?

Mr. Ethier: Mr. Speaker, nothing has changed. It is the way it was introduced today by the Leader of the Opposition. Let him introduce it on any other way and we will see what we do then. But introducing it as a non-confidence motion is inviting us to the gallows.

Mr. Friesen: Mr. Speaker, I believe that the Hon. Member used the word "absurd" in relation to this motion, stating that it was an absurdity to have it presented. He presumably supported the motion when it was introduced by Mr. Sharp because it was passed unanimously. Did he support a motion eight years ago that he now thinks is absurd and is now voting against? Which side is he on?

Mr. Ethier: Mr. Speaker, I regret that the Hon. Member is putting words into my speech that I did not use. I did not use the word "absurd" as to the motion.

Mr. McDermid: Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to the speech of the Hon. Parliamentary Secretary. I gather from what he said that because Cabinet Ministers work so hard and sacrifice so much, there is no difficulty with their contacting other sitting Cabinet Ministers after they have finished their tour of duty, either voluntarily or involuntarily. Is the Hon. Parliamentary Secretary saying that there is no problem with contacting sitting Cabinet Ministers and negotiating deals? I almost brought out the violins when he was saying how they sacrificed.

Every Member sacrifices in the House. Hon. Members realize the sacrifices they must make, and they should not be treated any differently from the honest businessman who is trying to get a contract with the Government to proceed with a project which he may have.

Is he telling me that there is nothing wrong with a Cabinet Minister contacting other Cabinet Ministers, especially because they worked so hard and are special? Is that what he was trying to say in his speech?

Mr. Ethier: I said that every Member of Parliament works very hard and their jobs are demanding on their families and themselves. I said that these demands are even greater on Cabinet Ministers. I would say that again.

Mr. Lewis: Mr. Speaker, due to the Parliamentary Secretary's experience in the Chair, I am sure that he will realize that no suggestion can be made on the debate of a non-confidence motion until it is called. For that reason we immediately agreed with the NDP, in the interest of having this matter examined so that the reputations of reputable people like Mr. Gillespie can be untarnished, that it be examined in committee. Since this was the Government's motion back in 1974, and it has not changed at all, what we on this

side cannot understand is why the Government is stonewalling attempts for the truth to come out.

● (1640)

Mr. McDermid: Cover-up.

Mr. Ethier: I find it very strange that the House Leader of the Opposition, himself, gets into this matter, asking these questions. I say, in all courtesy, that he is the one who should have called the House Leader for our Party over the weekend. He could have called him and suggested what he is suggesting this morning.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I recognize the Hon. Member for Winnipeg-Birds Hill.

Mr. Blaikie: I am not rising on a question, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Blais: I would like to ask a question.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The period for—I recognize the Minister of Supply and Services.

Mr. Blais: Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Parliamentary Secretary whether he, in effect, is not aware of the fact that today is basically the end of the Supply period. On this day, the Opposition is permitted to present a non-confidence motion in accordance with the rules. In effect, that non-confidence motion must be voted upon, and if it is not, we are, of course, infringing the rules. Under the circumstances, is he not aware of the fact that—

Mr. Blenkarn: Nonsense.

Mr. Blais: —that if the Opposition motion, in effect, is voted and if the Opposition wins that particular vote for one reason or another, then the Government must resign?

Mr. Blenkarn: Not so. There is supply to vote after, and that is the non-confidence.

Mr. Ethier: I understand it quite well, no one understands it more than the Leader of the Opposition or the House Leader of the Opposition, and that is why the Opposition brought it in this morning.

Mr. Nielsen: Will the distinguished Parliamentary Secretary, who has occupied the Chair so often in the past, readily admit to me that he is having his leg pulled a mile by the Minister who just spoke? Because, as he well knows, and I am asking him to agree with me, if the Government side consented, as requested by the Leader of the NDP, and it was agreed to by us, the provisions of Standing Order 62(9) could be suspended. That was the purpose in asking for consent, and the Government side is refusing that consent. Please tell us that the Minister is all wet.

Mr. Blais: No, he is not. He is as dry as anything.

Mr. Ethier: Mr. Speaker, I think that the Leader of the Opposition is all wet. We will not fall into the games that he