

*Supply*

referred to the public's concern about the integrity of politicians in the present Government, I would remind her that this entire story was a complete fabrication contrived by the Opposition parties a few weeks ago, while the fact of the matter is that the circumstances were known to the public and to the press, that events took place in full view of the public many months ago, namely, the announcement of a project in Nova Scotia sponsored by the Conservative Premier of Nova Scotia, an announcement that was made publicly and openly, and no one at that time or since then has tried to doubt the integrity of the people involved in this matter.

However, it is not the public that is worried or has any doubts about the integrity of Members of the Government. It is the Official Opposition that is having misgivings about its political objectives. The Hon. Member for Kingston and the Islands talks about integrity and credibility, but in my opinion, she ought to look in a mirror and ask herself whether she is really showing integrity and a sense of responsibility when she raises unfounded questions as she did today, and as the Leader of the Opposition, the Hon. Member for Yukon, did a few weeks ago and again this morning.

Mr. Speaker, it stands to reason that men and women in politics must be honest, but what is dreadful is that certain politicians hide behind parliamentary immunity to raise doubtful issues, knowing full well that they do not have a shred of evidence to back up their allegations. When they use their parliamentary immunity in this manner, not only do they reflect on the reputation of the people they attack, but they also do great harm to Parliament itself and to all those who work within Parliament.

I hope that this second day of debate will bring us somewhat closer to reality and enable us to draw sound conclusions on the sense of responsibility which must prevail on both sides of the House. We want to make sure that when politicians choose to accuse someone, they will at least have the decency not to do so under the cover of parliamentary immunity, but rather to make their accusations clearly in public outside the House and be prepared to suffer the consequences should their allegations prove to be unfounded. We are witnessing a flagrant abuse of parliamentary immunity to cast aspersions and throw mud at certain politicians, which inevitably reflect on the integrity of Parliament as a whole.

Indeed, I should like to talk about conflict of interest guidelines, Mr. Speaker, because I am the Registrar General of Canada. Shortly after implementing a conflict of interest policy applicable to each Minister of the Crown, the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) requested the Office of the Assistant Deputy Registrar General to administer most of the guidelines.

Hon. Members will recall that the Prime Minister set forth that policy in July 1973, the day after the tabling of the Green Paper entitled "Members of Parliament and Conflict of Interest" prepared by the Government and presented by the then President of the Privy Council, the Hon. Allan J. MacEachen, now Deputy Prime Minister. The Government was not

afraid to table that document and set conflict of interest guidelines.

In December of the same year, the Prime Minister explained in the House the guidelines applicable to public servants and senior officials appointed by Cabinet. The Public Servants Conflict of Interest Guidelines fall under the jurisdiction of the Treasury Board which made the Deputy Minister responsible for ensuring that civil servants in the various departments follow the guidelines. I can say that since then all departments have provided additional codes of ethics governing certain aspects of the official duties of their staff. Some Crown corporations and agencies have also drafted additional guidelines. And the office of the Assistant Deputy Registrar General has on different occasions helped several of those departments and agencies to draw up their own code. The guidelines on conflicts of interest for officials are used as models to set up the other codes. Indeed seven principles have been stated and in fact constitute the very basis for the lines of conduct of all individuals who have assumed responsibilities within the administration. It is interesting to note, Mr. Speaker, that in those allegations, in those half-truths and statements by Members opposite reference was never made to any misconduct as disrespect of standards by a Minister or an official. The entire so-called Coalgate affair had to do with a preferential treatment said to have been granted to a former minister who had been out of politics for many years and who at the request of a provincial government had endeavored to launch, in co-operation not only with government provincial authorities but also with private interests a job-creating project in an underdeveloped area of the country. And all those pieces of gossip and those alleged scandals have nothing to do with the people who are now governing the country and are abiding by the standards governing conflicts of interest. I would like to mention briefly those seven principles because it is essential that they be kept in mind.

● (1540)

The first principle is as follows: An individual holding an office with responsibilities in the Civil Service should not only comply with the law, but his conduct must be such as to withstand the most thorough investigation. In addition, those people should have no financial interest liable to come in conflict in any way whatsoever with the carrying out of their official duties. That is the first principle. It is interesting to examine that principle and see whether the individuals involved have violated that principle, as alleged by the Opposition. It is entirely out of the question. After considering the situation, one realizes that the principle has not been infringed upon. Now, the second principle: There must be no conflict nor any appearance of conflict between private interests and official duties. Once appointed, the officials should manage their own affairs so as to avoid any conflict of interest.

Third principle: Public servants should exercise care in the management of their private affairs so as not to benefit, or