

● (1440)

That surely is not what the Member for Calgary West is trying to put forward to basically create a smokescreen over the facts in this case. I am always prepared to give someone the benefit of the doubt. I said that I am not in any way trying to impeach the integrity, only the judgment, of the Minister of Finance. I know the Hon. Member for Calgary West well enough to know that he is being mischievous in even purporting to offer this House and the people of Canada such an explanation of those events.

**Mr. Deans:** Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Hon. Member who has just spoken. I want to ask him two things. First, would it not be reasonable to assume that if members of the Cabinet were informed that contracts ought not to be let to the relatives of other members or to relatives of their own, that information could then be imparted to the relatives of various Cabinet Ministers? Second, is the Hon. Member aware, and I am sure he is from his previous role, that the guidelines under which he operated, "Avoidance of Preferential Treatment", state:

Ministers shall not accord preferential treatment in relation to any official matters to relatives or friends—

It goes on.

**Mr. Andre:** Read it.

**Mr. Hnatyshyn:** Read the part about spouses and children.

**Mr. Deans:** That is at the end. That is a different section altogether dealing with an entirely different matter.

**Mr. Andre:** No.

**Mr. Deans:** Yes, it is. It goes on in an entirely different manner to deal with that.

**Mr. Hnatyshyn:** It says they don't apply.

**Mr. Deans:** Unfortunately, we are not talking about spouses or children.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Charest):** Order. I hate to interrupt a good conversation—

**Mr. Deans:** As usual, the Government House Leader and the Minister of Supply and Services (Mr. Andre) are wrong. Does the Hon. Member for Saint-Henri-Westmount (Mr. Johnston) agree that a brother-in-law might just fit within the definition of relative, and not necessarily but certainly could fit within the definition of friend?

**Mr. Johnston:** Mr. Speaker, my friend from Hamilton Mountain puts his finger on the issue. That is the issue of preferential treatment. That surely is the issue. There are many competent relatives in this world who may come forward and tender, win contracts, provide value for money and there is no preferential treatment and no appearance of preferential treatment. The issue here is the clear appearance of preferential treatment, although I would say to the Hon. Member for

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Hamilton Mountain, and I hope that he will agree with me, that there are many issues involved besides that one. That is why in my comments I wanted to focus on the administrative issues of this particular problem, the fact of having people in office without having signed conflict of interest guidelines, quite apart from the issue of preferential treatment and the patronage issues that are before us in this case.

**Mr. Andre:** How about if they are living together and not married?

**Mr. Shields:** Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a question to the previous speaker. When he was President of the Treasury Board, I am sure that he would not give contracts to any of his relatives. However, did he authorize contracts for Ed Lumley's relatives?

**Mr. Johnston:** Mr. Speaker, as President of the Treasury Board I did not authorize contracts *per se*. The Minister of Supply and Services handled most of the contracts. There were obviously some contracts in our Department as there were in other Departments at the time. Again, that is not the issue—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Charest):** Order.

**Mr. Johnston:** Do I not have the right to reply?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Charest):** The time for questions and comments is now over. Resuming debate.

**Mr. Les Benjamin (Regina West):** Mr. Speaker, I listened to the Hon. Member for Calgary Centre (Mr. Andre) reply to my colleague from Hamilton Mountain (Mr. Deans) about the NDP generally being sanctimonious, righteous and pure. I believe those were the words he used. I remind him that it was not the New Democratic Party that laid out and set the high standards that have brought this issue to the attention of the Canadian public, the media and Members of Parliament. It was the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney). It was he who was so unctuous and sanctimonious during the election campaign last summer. We did not lay out the high standards, the purity and sanctimony. It was the Right Hon. Member from Baie Comeau.

Quite honestly, we were glad to hear him set out a new, higher level of standards for people in public life, particularly people in the Government of Canada. This issue is before us now not because of anything that anybody in the Opposition has done or said or anybody else in the media or public of Canada has said, but as a result of what the Prime Minister had to say. To quote the Right Hon. Member when he was Leader of the Opposition, Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party, addressing the then Prime Minister, the present Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Turner), he said: "You had an option, Sir, to say no and you chose to say yes to the old attitudes and the old stories of the Liberal Party". That was on July 25 last year.

At that time the present Prime Minister, then Leader of the Opposition, said: "The vulgarity of the Liberal patronage machine is such that we are going to have to take a second