

Supply

Mr. Ian Deans (Hamilton Mountain): Mr. Speaker, in an attempt to return to what I consider to be the question before the House of Commons, I want to start by saying to Government Members that no one is questioning the character of the Minister of Finance (Mr. Lalonde).

Mr. Gourd: Look at the questions you asked this week.

Mr. Deans: I want to suggest that perhaps Hon. Members opposite should be kind enough to listen. I have listened all day to every Hon. Member who spoke. What I am personally doing is questioning the Minister's judgment. That happens to be my job, to come to Parliament and to elicit from the Cabinet the information I believe is necessary in order to make proper judgments about matters of public importance. I am not likely to ever suggest that the character of the Minister is to be questioned. However, I see some important questions which should be answered. We should not become drawn into a discussion of the value of the project because it is not a matter which is before the House at the moment. It is entirely possible that an accurate assessment of the project would prove it to be of little value. However, another assessment may well prove it to be of considerable value. However, that is not the question.

The question before us centers on two questions. First, it centers on whether a former Minister of the Crown, or Ministers who have left office, violated the guidelines as set out by the Prime Minister. Second, it centers on whether the present Minister of Finance who, at the time this deal was entered into, was the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, has fulfilled all of the requirements of the guidelines for Ministers in office. I would like to deal with those two questions and to state my reason for asking the questions that I raised earlier in the week, and my reason for rising in the debate today.

The first question is, did Mr. Gillespie adhere to the guidelines as set out by the Prime Minister? First, let us consider what the guidelines state so that there is no doubt as to what we are discussing. The guidelines state that a former office holder must not, within the relevant time period, lobby for or on behalf of any person or commercial corporation before any Department or agency by which he was employed or with which he had a direct and substantial official relationship during the period of two years prior to the termination of his employment. That was the guideline in place when Mr. Gillespie was a Minister. Mr. Gillespie, in accepting his appointment to the Cabinet, accepted the fact that he must abide by that guideline if he left office.

I suggest that there is quite clear evidence which would show to anyone reviewing the documents tabled by either the Prime Minister or by the present Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Chrétien) that Mr. Gillespie most certainly did carry on a continued relationship with the former Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources on behalf not only of himself but also on behalf of other corporate citizens, and that in so doing he was clearly in violation of the guidelines.

No matter how often Hon. Members say, "Not so", the record is clear. Mr. Gillespie telephoned, there are records to show that he carried on correspondence, and even went as far as seeking the assistance of Mr. Cohen, the Deputy Minister, in getting his project "off the ground", in exactly those words. He was therefore using his former position as a Minister in a way which was in clear violation of the guidelines.

Further, at the time Mr. Gillespie was a Minister, there was a guideline stating that a former office holder must not, within the relevant time period, give counsel for commercial purposes concerning the programs or policies of the Department or agency by which he was employed or with which he had a direct or substantial official relationship during the period of one year prior to the termination of his employment.

• (1640)

I want to suggest that there is even on this count clear evidence on the record to show that in the year immediately after Mr. Gillespie left the Ministry he did in fact give counsel and therefore was in violation of that guideline also. If we accept—and quite clearly the Cabinet members and others who are carrying on private conversations frankly do not give a damn about it because they have already decided to whitewash the thing—however, if one accepts that there was at least sufficient evidence that one could draw that conclusion, that there was sufficient evidence that Mr. Gillespie might have been in violation of the guidelines to the extent of having other than Members of Parliament wonder about it, then you have to wonder why the Minister of Energy did not himself recognize that that may well pose a problem for him at some future date.

Let me suggest to you that it is not only the Members of the Opposition who are concerned about whether Mr. Gillespie violated the guidelines. In the letter contained in the voluminous documents that were tabled yesterday, there is a memorandum from Dr. J. H. Walsh to Dr. K. Whitham, dated April 14, 1981, and in that memorandum he says:

3. (ii) The role of Mr. Gillespie: Concerns were expressed regarding the retaining and daily consultant fee (\$600) to be paid to Mr. Gillespie, and about the terms under which the Consortium partners have the right to buy out his interest. There is also a question of whether Mr. Gillespie's participation is in variance with conflict of interest guidelines.

Mr. Lalonde: Read on.

Mr. Deans: Do not worry, I am going to read on. It goes on:

I replied regarding the financial arrangements between Mr. Gillespie and the Consortium members that this matter was wholly transparent and that Ministers could approve or disapprove in their wisdom.

We are now questioning the wisdom of the Minister, and I think quite rightly so.

Beyond that it goes on to say:

With regard to conflict of interest matters, I noted that Mr. Gillespie's term as Minister ended June 4, 1979, when Mr. Hnatyshyn was appointed. In any case, I could not see that there was any direct benefit to Mr. Gillespie arising out of the negotiations with the two Governments.

Mr. Lalonde: Ha!