

The Hon. Minister looked into the situation and found that he could save half a million dollars for the Canadian people. That is an important consideration. What difference does it make if the contract goes to a relative or not if the Minister can save half a million dollars? What difference would it have made if that firm had bid and had still showed a saving of half a million dollars? The Hon. Member forgets all about that. This matter is an attempt to save money for the people of Canada and the people of Canada could not care less which firm happens to get the contract as long as it does the job efficiently and saves money for the taxpayer.

Mr. Deans: Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member is quite wrong, of course. In fact, the Hon. Member's colleague, the Hon. Member for Simcoe North (Mr. Lewis), answered his question in part. Any advertising agency would have bid the same amount. As the Hon. Member for Simcoe North pointed out, there is a schedule which advertising agencies follow and therefore they receive x number of dollars in return for doing work under a contract of whatever size. Therefore, the fact of the matter is that the saving is obscure.

Nevertheless, what must be recognized is that the question is about the appearance of preferential treatment. Since any other advertising agency could have undertaken the work on the same basis, it would have been easy for the Government not to have put on the payroll the brother-in-law of the Minister of Finance in order to make sure—

Mr. Speaker: I regret to advise the Hon. Member that the time for questions and answers has expired.

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of Supply and Services): Mr. Speaker, this is the end of an amazing week in which there has been a spectacle of sanctimony, outrage and indignation. What happened is so outrageous that not only one Opposition Party but both Opposition Parties felt they must move non-confidence in the Government. The Government, horror of all horrors, saved the taxpayers \$500,000 per year. For that it deserves to be tossed out.

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Turner), that great man of virtue as demonstrated last June with his arrangement with the previous Prime Minister, Mr. Trudeau, first introduced the motion. I thought we were going to be debating his motion. When I read the Order Paper yesterday, it included a motion from the Leader of the Opposition which read:

That this House condemns the Government for its serious misuse of its power to make appointments and to let contracts and, in particular, for its disregard of conflict of interest guidelines in this and other matters.—The Leader of the Opposition.

He then withdrew that motion. There is one of two explanations for that, Mr. Speaker. Either he is slow of wit and he realized after he saw it in print how outrageous it would be for him to put something like that on the Order Paper, or he has made another arrangement with Mr. Trudeau.

Mr. Tobin: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I could just as easily rise on a question of privilege. The Hon. House Leader of the New Democratic Party will acknowledge that

Supply

the motion that is being debated today is, by agreement of the Opposition Parties, the NDP motion. To make that kind of spurious allegation is beneath even the Minister.

• (1240)

Mr. Speaker: There is a point of order relating to relevancy which I hope the Minister will recognize.

Mr. Andre: Mr. Speaker, what we are debating today is the agreement which was reached, presumably after the Leader of the Opposition—who incidentally is not here; and because the behaviour of the Government has been so outrageous, only six members of the Opposition are here—

Mr. Tobin: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

Mr. Speaker: The Hon. Member for Humber-Port au Port-St. Barbe on a point of order.

Mr. Tobin: Mr. Speaker, the Minister knows that he cannot refer to the presence or absence of Members in the House. He ought to make a relevant speech. If he has a good defence, then he should make it and cut the rhetoric on this shameful action by the Government.

Mr. Andre: Mr. Speaker, I assume that I will be allowed to give my speech. I realize that the Hon. Member for Humber-Port au Port-St. Barbe (Mr. Tobin) has a sensitive nature and a delicate persona and finds this very difficult. I can understand his concern.

The House Leader of the New Democratic Party said that in the opinion of this House the granting of an untendered contract to the brother-in-law of the present Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson) by the Government of Canada is an unacceptable action. It was so unacceptable and so terrible that he was forced to introduce a motion of non-confidence in the House. There is nothing so sanctimonious as a socialist, especially a socialist who is out of office. I regret that I do not have the time to talk about the performance of socialist Governments in Manitoba, Saskatchewan and British Columbia.

A great deal was made this week of the violation of the guidelines. The Hon. Member for Hamilton Mountain (Mr. Deans) read the guidelines which stated:

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

The Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition raised the same matter. He said that on that basis the Minister of Finance should resign. It was conveniently forgotten that the Minister of Finance had nothing to do with that contract. The contract was let by the Department of Supply and Services. That is my Department. I am the responsible Minister. If I were enriching my relatives in some way, then the Member might well have a substantial question. However, that did not bother the House Leader of the New Democratic Party, and it certainly did not bother a succession of Liberals who stood up in phoney indignation demanding the Minister's resignation.