

owns it, and it is also blind so far as the public is concerned in respect of knowing what is in it. This is what I mean that justice must appear to have been done, and the only way is by having full disclosure.

I have had an opportunity to look through about 69 pages of the green paper on conflict of interest. It so happens that I picked up a bill from the province of British Columbia which contains five pages, but which does more in respect of showing that justice is being done and appears to be done, than all the 69 pages in this green paper on conflict of interest. I might point out that that bill was passed in British Columbia in September of this year. It provides that every elected official in the province of British Columbia must disclose his assets, period, that those assets be made public and that the public have an opportunity to examine them. In that way the real question of conflict of interest is avoided, because if a cabinet minister who has control over the economy in a particular area discloses his assets, then I will respect him because I know he will make sure there is no apparent conflict of interest.

If we want to be sure that not only is justice done but that it appears to be done there is not a reason in the world why total disclosure should not be made of the assets of every member of this House.

I was very interested in the remarks of the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) on July 18 when he said this:

The government believes that no higher standards should be demanded of anyone than of ministers themselves.

That is a wonderful sentiment. I waited patiently to see it reflected somewhere, but it has not been reflected in anything. In fact the green paper sets a lower standard in respect of cabinet ministers than it does for members of the House of Commons. This is why at page 37 the committee that is to be appointed to study the question of conflict of interest is given wide powers except in this case:

The Committee may not investigate conflicts of interest of a Cabinet Minister if the alleged improprieties result from the exercise of his duties as a Minister of the Crown.

Why should we exclude ministers of the Crown from the inquiry of the committee while we include members of this House? It seems to me one could argue that lower standards are being set for ministers in spite of the very eloquent remarks of the Prime Minister, in which he indicated that ministers should have the highest standards.

● (2050)

I think we all agree that if we are going to do a service to the public we must see that justice appears to be done, and it can only appear to be done when the public knows that those assets are on the record and are disclosed.

An hon. Member: Tell that to Mr. Barrett.

Mr. Leggatt: Let me tell the hon. member that it is Mr. Barrett who should be telling this government that, because the bill to which I am referring requires full disclosure from every elected official in British Columbia. It is that bill that this House should adopt if we want to be realistic about full disclosure.

Conflict of Interest

Before concluding my remarks I want to comment on the questions raised by the Minister of the Environment (Mrs. Sauvé) this afternoon in her remarkable defence of the failure to bring spouses under the bill, using women's rights as an excuse.

Some hon. Members: Shame!

Mr. Leggatt: If there is a group in this country that wants to see that justice is done and appears to be done to them and to everybody else, it is women. And they should be the first group, and I am sure they are, that would be critical of a minister that would use that argument to hide behind the failure to have proper conflict of interest guidelines. I do not need to deal too much more with that, because I think the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands (Miss MacDonald) dealt with it very successfully. In fact, she dealt with it so successfully that the next speaker said: "Let us not deal with women's rights any more, I think we have had enough", and I am sure they had.

I think that if you analysed that kind of argument, which is an elitist argument about women and which is the wrong argument to use—remember, when you are talking about women you talk about the most unemployed, the most on welfare—you find that they have interests besides whether they are going to marry cabinet ministers, and they have other worries than whether or not they have to disclose their assets.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mrs. Sauvé: I want to ask the hon. member how he thinks a cabinet minister will remain married if the condition of her being a cabinet minister is that her husband stops having a career?

Mr. Broadbent: It does not follow.

Mr. Leggatt: Let me say in answer to the question that there is an act called the married women's property act under which every woman who comes to marriage is entitled to own the property she brings to the marriage. If it is in her name, I am not interested in it, but I am damn interested in the property she acquires since the date of her marriage. I think that should be disclosed, and not to disclose it is a way of avoiding justice appearing to be done. That is all the public wants, and all that the House really wants.

Mr. Jamieson: You are an old reactionary.

Mr. Leggatt: I am sorry that the hon. member for Vaudreuil (Mr. Herbert) is not in the House, but it is he who said that the real reason for this debate today was not conflict of interest but to raise the question of the SIU.

The first time that those three letters were mentioned in the House in this debate was when the hon. member for Vaudreuil decided that was the time to mention them. I am surprised he bothered with it, but it is he who brought it into the debate. I must say, as one member who was not in the House when many of these questions were asked, that I have seen a lot of smoke but not very much fire. Perhaps we have had a little too much protest. I do not know why they want to raise that question in terms of