

ciate that this House was involved in a very protracted debate and consultation with the country on the referendum debate all fall. Really, we have not had much time.

I suspect the bill will be produced well before Easter. I hope, because the report had the unanimous backing of all parties, that it and the legislation that comes from it will be approved and put through possibly on a Friday with one speaker from each side. It is the kind of thing we all want and need. It has a lot of flexibility and it does not make a series of rules that are impossible to comply with.

We looked at the American situation and felt that was the case there. We looked at the British situation where they do not have any rules and felt that we could not really go along with what they had. What we have proposed is a take-off from what is available for members of the Quebec legislature, the Ontario legislature and in British Columbia. What we have is a system that we think will work far better than anything to date.

The juriconsult will be appointed for a seven-year period. He will be responsible to Parliament. He will report annually to Parliament. He will publish in a fair way the assets of members so we may take a look at them. They might not be in detail. It may say that you own shares in a certain company but it will not tell you exactly how many. It will only be disclosed as a significant interest or an insignificant interest or a minor interest. It will be a fair, complete disclosure with no hiding.

• (1720)

Members are not elected to get rich here. Nobody gets rich being a member of Parliament. People think it is a grand job but vice-principals in public schools earn what we earn. This is not a job to get rich on. One is not going to line one's pockets being a member of Parliament. One cannot make money in the job. You do it because you want to do something for your country. That is what you are here for.

I find it disgraceful when members of Parliament stand up in this place and accuse members of some action or the rumour of some action for no reason at all. Take the Sinclair Stevens case. There was no crime committed. There was no charge that could be laid on Stevens but he was convicted in the press and by this House. I think that issue was deplorable and disgraceful. I say that not

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because of any great, long friendship or anything, although he is a friend.

I want to say that those rabid attacks by the rat pack with the allegations and insinuations drove a good person out of politics. Perhaps the judgment of Mr. Justice Parker is correct but I must say that there were no rules. There was an anticipation or possibility of a conflict and the anticipation and possibility of conflict created a conflict.

We had before the committee another member of this House who has a great deal of commercial experience and background, the hon. member for LaSalle—Émard. He ran for the leadership of the Liberal Party. He has a great deal of business experience and his family is heavily involved in a number of activities through Canada Steamship Lines. He owns certain preferred shares—voting shares are with his sons in a voting trust and so on—but the fact of the matter is that he does not take part in that company at all.

However, under the current rules of Georges Tsai, he could not be a member of cabinet. Why? Canada Steamship Lines is a public company, so he would have to divest.

Under the current system, many people who could be attracted to public life and who could offer Canada a great deal would be denied the right. Canada would be denied the right to have them.

Our proposal under our conflict of interest suggestion by our unanimous committee report will make it possible for the member for LaSalle—Émard to be a cabinet minister and possibly even something better than that at some stage in his career. I wish him luck. My colleague says that it will be many years from now. Perhaps it will be many years from now.

I want to conclude by saying that we have come to grips in this Parliament with this issue. The Prime Minister has come to grips with this issue. To have this debate today on a matter that I think we have come to grips with in a unanimous fashion, that the member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell knows will be brought before this House in legislation before Easter, is an absolute disgrace.

I want to know something from the resolution. Where is the incessant inability to function within the framework of existing legislation guidelines and standards? I do not know of any item ever brought to this House and to this debate with the incessant inability to function within the framework of existing legislation, guidelines