

Interim Supply

. . . Again, no minister is justified under any circumstances in using official information, information that has come to him as a minister, for his own private profit or for that of his friends. Further, no minister ought to allow or to put himself into a position to be tempted to use his official influence in support of any scheme or in furtherance of any contract in regard to which he has an undisclosed private interest. . . . Again, no minister ought to accept from persons who are in negotiation with or seeking to enter into contractual or proprietary or pecuniary relations with the state any kind of favour. . . . I will add a further proposition, which I am not sure has been completely formulated, though it has no doubt been adumbrated in the course of these debates, and that is that ministers should scrupulously avoid speculative investments in securities as to which, from their special means of early or confidential information, they have or may have an advantage over other people in anticipating market changes.

Professor Jennings goes on to say:

These he stated as "rules of obligation." He added that there were certain "rules of prudence" which had never been formulated and which could hardly be put on precise or universal terms. "One of those rules is that in these matters such persons should carefully avoid all transactions which can give colour or countenance to the belief that they are doing anything which the rules of obligation forbid."

May I repeat that last sentence?

One of those rules is that in these matters such persons should carefully avoid all transactions which can give colour or countenance to the belief that they are doing anything which the rules of obligation forbid.

In the chain of events this matter came before the house again when the Prime Minister indicated that a large amount of succession duties coming from this estate was to provide the basic amount for the establishment of the Canada council. Subsequently we have been informed that this large corporation is now passing into the hands of three corporations, two of which are Canadian, one of which has probably received the greatest amount of government work in connection with its operations of any company in Canada and the other has been the recipient over the past few years of at least half a million dollars a year by way of subsidy under the Emergency Gold Mining Assistance Act.

It seems to me that many questions are being left unanswered in this connection. As I recall it, the minister stated last year that he was only going to act as a partial executor of the estate, that he was only interested in one phase, what might happen in connection with the disposition of the control of Algoma Steel. I think it was pointed out to him at that time that it was an impossibility to separate the responsibilities he had as an executor into watertight compartments and that obviously a question of ethics was involved here which might have serious repercussions in the future. I should like to refer

[Mr. Hamilton (York West).]

to Widdifield on Executors' Accounts. At page 37, dealing with the duties of an executor, he has this to say:

The first duty of a trustee, whether an executor, an administrator or a guardian, is to acquaint himself, as soon as possible, with the nature and circumstances of the trust property; to make a complete inventory thereof; to obtain, where possible, the possession or control of the trust property to himself, and, subject to the provisions of the will, get in the trust money invested on insufficient or hazardous security.

Here is the duty of all executors and trustees. At page 129, in dealing with succession duty—

The Deputy Chairman: Order. I am sorry to have to interrupt the hon. gentleman but it is five o'clock and the house will proceed with the consideration of private and public bills.

Mr. Harris: Mr. Chairman, I have been informed that there are a number of hon. members who would like to express their views on the three private bills, so many, in fact, that I rather doubt that any bill would carry during the one hour period. For that reason I therefore suggest that we might devote the hour to a continuation of this debate. I understand it is a fact that opposition members feel that because of their views on some of the private bills, in fact all three, they could devote the whole hour, and under these circumstances we might just as well employ that time for this debate if we are not going to make any progress in respect of the private bills.

The Deputy Chairman: The leader of the house will realize, I think, that the committee of supply as such would not have the right to set aside the rules by unanimous consent. Therefore, it being five o'clock I propose to move into the house with the Speaker in the chair.

Progress reported.

PRIVATE BILLS

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Applewhaite): Is it agreed by unanimous consent that all business reserved for this hour shall stand?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Applewhaite): All business for the private bills hour having been stood by consent, the house will resume the business interrupted at five o'clock.

SUPPLY

The house in committee of supply, Mr. Applewhaite in the chair.