

Supply

silliest. Let me try to treat it as if it were serious. I have never, not on one single occasion, said a word about the Minister of Finance, not a word, on this matter. I have asked the Prime Minister if, as the head of the Government, he believes that that practice into which the brother-in-law of the Minister of Finance fell, and as a result of which the Minister of Finance becomes implicated as a third party, is acceptable in his mind. All I can say to the Hon. Member is if the Prime Minister had responded to my question, perhaps we would not have had a non-confidence motion. The fact of the matter is that the Prime Minister, as he is wont to do, tries to substitute blarney for substance.

● (1230)

Mr. Redway: Mr. Speaker, *The Toronto Star* editorial also indicates that there is absolutely no evidence of impropriety in this case and that it is silly for the NDP to demand that the Minister of Finance step down. I wonder if the Hon. Member agrees with that as well.

Mr. Deans: No, Mr. Speaker. It is clear to me that *The Toronto Star* misunderstands, but that is not unusual. If *The Toronto Star* were more cognizant of the way in which Parliament operates and the responsibilities that fall upon Cabinet Ministers individually and collectively, it would come to the conclusion that the impropriety lies in the fact that the Minister of Finance was aware that his brother-in-law had the contract but did nothing about it.

Mr. Thacker: Mr. Speaker, as we know, there are all sorts of positions at the municipal level that are appointed by municipal Governments and there are positions at the provincial level appointed by provincial Governments. These appointments are made by whichever type of Government is in power, be it Liberal, Conservative or NDP. The same happens at the federal level.

If there were no Crown corporations or none of those enormous agencies and regulatory bodies, there would be far fewer positions to which people would be appointed. To be consistent, the Hon. Member would have to agree that we should have fewer positions.

The second dimension is this: Who should make those appointments? Does the Hon. Member want to take appointment making out of the hands of the Government of the day, a Government that can be turfed out of office, and put it into the hands of the bureaucrats? I would like to have the Hon. Member give me a genuine, constructive solution to the problem.

We either cut back on agencies or we put in a different mechanism for appointing. I would put the argument that I would rather have the responsibility for appointments in the hands of people who, if they abuse the responsibility, can be turfed out, rather than in the hands of the bureaucrats.

Mr. Deans: Mr. Speaker, in answer to the Hon. Member, I would like to indicate to him that the motion deals with the granting of an untendered contract. It has nothing to do with

the makeup of boards and commissions and nothing to do with whether there should be more or less of them. That is not relevant to our discussion today.

I have made it quite clear that what we are saying is that we do not expect that relatives of members of the Cabinet should be excluded from participating in the business of Canada. We say, however, that the only entry they should be allowed is through a tendered contract. They should only be permitted to take part if they bid against others and win. They should not be given or appear to be given preferential treatment. There should therefore not be the option open to give to family members of Cabinet Ministers contracts that others had no opportunity to seek. That is all we are suggesting and that is what is wrong with what happened.

Therefore, I say to the Hon. Member that if at some future time he wishes to deal with the matter of the numbers of boards and commissions and the makeup of boards and commissions, there is a great deal I would like to say about that. However, I do not want to try to do here today what the Prime Minister and others have tried to do over the course of the last few days, which is to try to obscure the only important and relevant question with regard to what happened with Lawson Murray.

Mr. Lewis: Mr. Speaker, I would like to follow up on the question of tendering with the Hon. Member. He is probably aware that in the advertising business an advertisement for \$100 is paid for at the rate of \$85. There is a 15 per cent advertising agency commission. If ten advertising agencies had bid on this untendered contract, they would have all bid \$234,000 and would have all netted the same advertising commission which would be 15 per cent of that. In that case, how would the Hon. Member structure his tendering conditions? All agencies would tender the same amount. Would the Hon. Member not admit that the Government of the day is entitled to take into account in that tendering process trust and ability and that the money of which the Hon. Member is making a great deal would be the same to all advertising agencies?

Mr. Deans: Mr. Speaker, that is in fact an excellent question. I agree that there are situations in which tendering is not appropriate, but in those situations family members of Ministers of the Crown cannot be given the contract. That is the difference. Yes, there are situations in which it is not necessary to tender because of the size of the contract or for other reasons. However, I am saying that under those circumstances family members of Ministers of the Crown are excluded from participating. That is all I am saying.

Mr. Taylor: Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member just mentioned that there was only one question. There is another question in which the people of Canada are very interested. Every Government has various ways of handling contracts. They are not all done by tender and they are not all done by competition. Some are done by invitation. NDP Governments do that the same as every other Government.