

Supply

that this government, supposedly so respectful of rights and privileges of all members of Parliament, did not name to parliamentary commissions representatives of all parties, but exclusively Progressive Conservative members. Now we learn that not only are Progressive Conservative members favoured, but even Progressive Conservative candidates defeated at the last election seem to be more important in the Canada Works program than the minister's own officials, and certainly the members of Parliament democratically elected by the Canadian people of all provinces.

● (1610)

I think the minister owes us some explanations in that respect. I suggest that the minister's failure to deny that a list of the projects for every constituency had been sent to the Progressive Conservative candidates defeated in the province of Quebec is proof enough that there is some patronage and manipulation taking place in his office, in his department, surely with the complicity of the hon. member for Joliette, the Minister of Supply and Services, whom I see now giving all kinds of information to the minister. We notice that the Minister of Supply and Services is particularly embarrassed by those revelations.

Mr. La Salle: I am looking after the interests of Quebec.

Mr. Ouellet: The Minister of Supply and Services, the hon. member for Joliette, has just told us that he is looking after the interests of Quebec.

I am most happy to see that he is serious about this job, but I find it rather unacceptable that he cannot move any quicker because we are now aware of the facts. There have been telephone calls from defeated candidates. Moreover, quite a number of letters have been sent to his office in the care of a certain Mrs. Lavigne who works in the minister's office, who is responsible for reviewing with the local patronage groups all the Canada Works projects for the province of Quebec coming under the jurisdiction of the minister from Joliette, and for deciding whether such and such a project should be approved or not.

Mr. Chairman, the secretary of a municipality in Quebec called the minister's office within the last few days. He wanted to know how it was that the project of his municipality had not yet been approved. It had been stalled for weeks in the office of the Minister of Employment and Immigration. The municipal authorities were anxious to know whether the departmental officials had approved their project, which the local member of Parliament democratically elected by the people had also approved. But the project did not seem to have been allowed by the Minister of Employment and Immigration. He was told by someone from the office of the Minister of Supply and Services that this dear minister who is looking after the interests of Quebecers had obtained a postponement from his colleague, the Minister of Employment and Immigration, and

[Mr. Ouellet.]

that his staff would have to work through the weekend to make a selection of the projects recommended by defeated Progressive Conservative candidates in Quebec, and moreover, that some projects already recommended by the department and for which the Liberal member of Parliament had given his approval would necessarily be rejected to provide the funds required for the projects submitted by Progressive Conservative friends.

This is the information that the secretary of a municipality was given by the secretary in the office of the Minister of Supply and Services. Mr. Chairman, I have no objection to seeing the Minister of Supply and Services play a special role in allocating funds set aside for the province of Quebec. He was elected, he is a minister of the Crown, he has special responsibilities, and I have no objection to his giving advice to his colleague. I think this is quite acceptable. He, the Minister of Supply and Services, so very candidly stated for all to hear after the last election that they intended to resort to patronage, that they had been in opposition long enough, that finally he would have an opportunity to do so and that he would hurry to do it.

What I do not accept from the Minister of Employment and Immigration is his current procrastination. He does not even have his colleague's candour and frankness to state squarely that, yes, patronage is rampant in his office, thanks to the complicity of officials from employment and immigration and from the office of the Minister for Supply and Services, that together they delayed for weeks projects that should have been approved for the province of Quebec, because they have not finished consulting with all the defeated Progressive Conservative candidates, and that very soon these funds will be approved and spent in Quebec. I wish he were frank and honest enough to state squarely that they are resorting to patronage. This afternoon, the minister in his protracted answers eluded the actual questions put to him in turn by the hon. members for Bonaventure-Îles-de-la-Madeleine, Manicouagan and Matapédia-Matane.

● (1620)

Every time those members asked him questions, he did not have the courage to confess publicly what his colleague, the Minister of Supply and Services, does not mind saying openly. He may be right, but then he may be wrong in being that open. It is for him to decide and for the people to judge. But at least he is honest enough to tell us openly what he is doing. I do not understand why the Minister of Employment and Immigration should not be that open. I find this program is too important and has too much impact on thousands of Canadians to play with words like that and waste the time of members by dodging the questions that are put to him.

Earlier the minister glossed over the fact that apparently a Progressive Conservative candidate submitted a project for over \$200,000. In answer to the hon. member for Matapédia-