

*Conflict of Interest*

There has been debate today as to what "public interest" means. The Minister of Public Works (Mr. Drury) asked whether it meant when you used your own public office to your own private advantage? It does mean that, but it means something else as well. It means whether your activities give you, or the people you work with, an advantage over other members of the public who are expected to come before the government, its agencies, its regulatory offices, its licensing bureaus and its financial granting offices with complete equality with any other group or citizen that is applying.

It is interesting that this issue is raised at a time when a number of deputy ministers are retiring. The Deputy Minister of the Environment is leaving, the Deputy Minister of Finance for the past four and a half years is leaving, the Deputy Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce is retiring, as well as others. One of my colleagues reminds me that the Deputy Minister of Agriculture is also retiring.

It seems to me that at time when a number of deputy ministers are withdrawing from public service it becomes very important that the government immediately lay down guidelines and stipulations as to what their freedom of operations is after they leave the public service, and whether there should be a period—I call it a cooling off period—so they do not take with them, to use in a situation of immediacy, the knowledge they acquired in the service of all the public. It is interesting that the right hon. Prime Minister when answering me seemed to suggest that this alternative had been disposed of or rejected by the government as not being practical.

I am indebted to a citizen who wrote me, a Mr. V. H. Coley from the province of Alberta. He had this to say:

Ten or twelve years ago I worked for the C.N. Express in the bond department, working in the Federal Building on 107th St. We gave in bond shipments to the customs and when they were cleared delivered them. The gossip was that appraisers or men who worked in the customs long room assessing duty and sales tax, if they resigned from the service, were not allowed to work as or for customs brokers for one year, to remove the edge they had.

● (2040)

I ask hon. members to keep in mind what that citizen said. To quote him again, he said, "to remove the edge they had". Discussions were held with some officials in that particular department, and one of them said something interesting. He said that this requirement was "in order to remove the potency of the information which they have accumulated". It is interesting that indeed such regulations do exist. I shall cite for the benefit of all hon. members the regulations respecting the licensing of Custom house brokers. These regulations were promulgated in April, 1960, and so far as I know are still in effect. In the qualifications for licence section in these regulations appears the following:

The Committee shall not recommend to the Minister the granting of a licence to an applicant unless the applicant satisfies the Committee that he . . .

Then there are a number of things he must satisfy the committee about which are enumerated, following which item (f) reads:

(f) has not been an officer of the Customs and Excise Division of the Department within two years from the date of the application; and

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(g) is not related either by birth or by marriage to an officer of the Customs and Excise Division of the Department.

It is difficult for me to understand, and I think it will be extremely difficult for the public to understand, why the customs officer cannot go out into the private sector and use his knowledge accumulated within the public service within two years, and yet a deputy minister with all the power that that position gives him, and all the influence it gives him in relation to other members of the community, can go out immediately and place himself in a position that the Parliament of Canada will not allow to an ordinary customs official.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Fraser:** It is not just sufficient to say that this would be difficult, that it might create problems and that hon. members would not want to be restricted in what they can do. The fact of the matter is that the Parliament of Canada has already recognized this situation and enacted regulations. So, I am sorry the Prime Minister is not here tonight, but I would ask that someone bring this to his attention because it is extremely important that what we decide by law will apply to people away down the line should also apply to people in the most senior and powerful positions of the government of Canada.

It is my view, and I would urge it upon the government, that long before the time comes when it will be necessary to discuss the green paper and all its ramifications, in view of the fact there are increasingly more and more cases of senior public officials retiring and entering some sort of private life, that the government should now lay down some guidelines, which can be adjusted later if necessary, in order to clear up once and for all any doubt concerning whether or not these officials will leave the public service carrying with them an advantage which gives them an inside track against the interests of other members of the public, and in this way affect the public interest of our country.

**Mr. Stuart Leggatt (New Westminster):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to participate in this debate. I am delighted with the intensity of the debate. I think it certainly reflects, so far as our party is concerned, the great respect we have for and the way in which we cherish this institution. We try to develop guidelines which show that justice not only is done but appears to be done.

One of the interesting things about the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion (Mr. Jamieson)—and clearly he has the respect of every member in this House—is that he missed during his eloquent defence of his position the point that justice not only must be done but must appear to be done in terms of this particular piece of legislation. I have heard arguments from both sides of this House which avoid the principal issue, which is the question of full disclosure. We are still skirting around, above, under and over it, but are not really getting to the question of full disclosure because what the public wants to know is what one has to hide. The public wants full disclosure.

There is no reason why we should have to become involved in blind trusts or frozen trusts. A blind trust works both ways. It is blind in respect of the person who